

# CROSSROADS

The Magazine



Spring 2005

**Social Deviations**  
Behind the Curtain

# CONTENTS

3	<b>Carpe Noctum</b> Children of the night speak out
9	<b>Dying to be thin</b> Starvation has many causes, one end
14	<b>Plastic Society</b> Battle rages over reality shows' effects
18	<b>Hidden Communion</b> Joplin Jews seek refuge in holy temple
21	<b>Shattered Lives</b> Drunk driving affects more than driver, victim
26	<b>Suspension</b> Suspensions explore personal awareness
31	<b>Backyard Outback</b> Animal lover raises kangaroos
35	<b>Going Nomad</b> Volunteer chooses tent as home
39	<b>The Final Frontier</b> Trekkies defend their Sci Fi addiction
43	<b>Temperate Souls</b> Student sees smiles under stern visages
46	<b>Miracle Angel</b> Student is only known survivor of rare illness
51	<b>...not just another face in the crowd...</b> Fashion: conformity or faux pas?

**EDITOR**  
MELISSA DUNSON

**ART DIRECTOR**  
MELISSA CUNNINGHAM

## CONTRIBUTING

### WRITERS

KRISTIE RADER  
AURIEL BROWN  
JESSICA BOGLE  
JESSE MILLICAN  
MICHELLE NOWAK

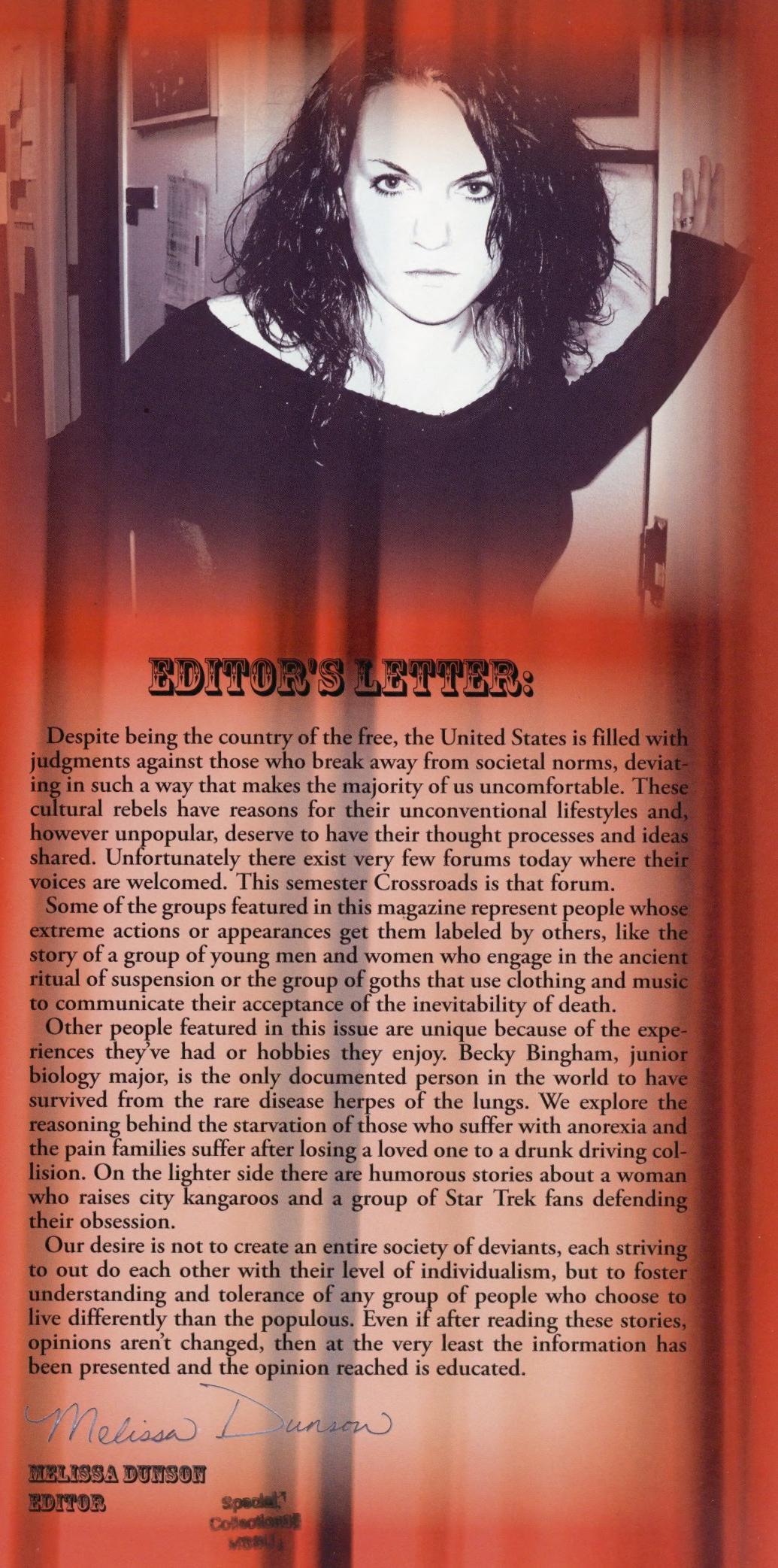
## PHOTOGRAPHERS

SCOTT WALTERS  
ANDY TEVIS

**ADVISOR**  
J.R. LEDFORD

**NOTE:**  
**CROSSROADS: THE MAGAZINE IS WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY STUDENTS AND PUBLISHED THREE TIMES A YEAR. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED DO NOT REPRESENT THOSE OF THE STUDENT BODY, FACULTY, STAFF OR ADMINISTRATION OF MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY.**  
**COPYRIGHT 2005 BY CROSSROADS: THE MAGAZINE AND MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY.**

**CROSSROADS IS LOCATED ONLINE AT [WWW.MSSU.EDU/CROSSROADS/](http://WWW.MSSU.EDU/CROSSROADS/) CONTACT US VIA E-MAIL TO LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK AT [CROSSROADS@MSSU.EDU](mailto:CROSSROADS@MSSU.EDU)**



## EDITOR'S LETTER:

Despite being the country of the free, the United States is filled with judgments against those who break away from societal norms, deviating in such a way that makes the majority of us uncomfortable. These cultural rebels have reasons for their unconventional lifestyles and, however unpopular, deserve to have their thought processes and ideas shared. Unfortunately there exist very few forums today where their voices are welcomed. This semester Crossroads is that forum.

Some of the groups featured in this magazine represent people whose extreme actions or appearances get them labeled by others, like the story of a group of young men and women who engage in the ancient ritual of suspension or the group of goths that use clothing and music to communicate their acceptance of the inevitability of death.

Other people featured in this issue are unique because of the experiences they've had or hobbies they enjoy. Becky Bingham, junior biology major, is the only documented person in the world to have survived from the rare disease herpes of the lungs. We explore the reasoning behind the starvation of those who suffer with anorexia and the pain families suffer after losing a loved one to a drunk driving collision. On the lighter side there are humorous stories about a woman who raises city kangaroos and a group of Star Trek fans defending their obsession.

Our desire is not to create an entire society of deviants, each striving to out do each other with their level of individualism, but to foster understanding and tolerance of any group of people who choose to live differently than the populous. Even if after reading these stories, opinions aren't changed, then at the very least the information has been presented and the opinion reached is educated.

*Melissa Dunson*

MELISSA DUNSON  
EDITOR

Special  
Collection  
MSSU

# Carpe



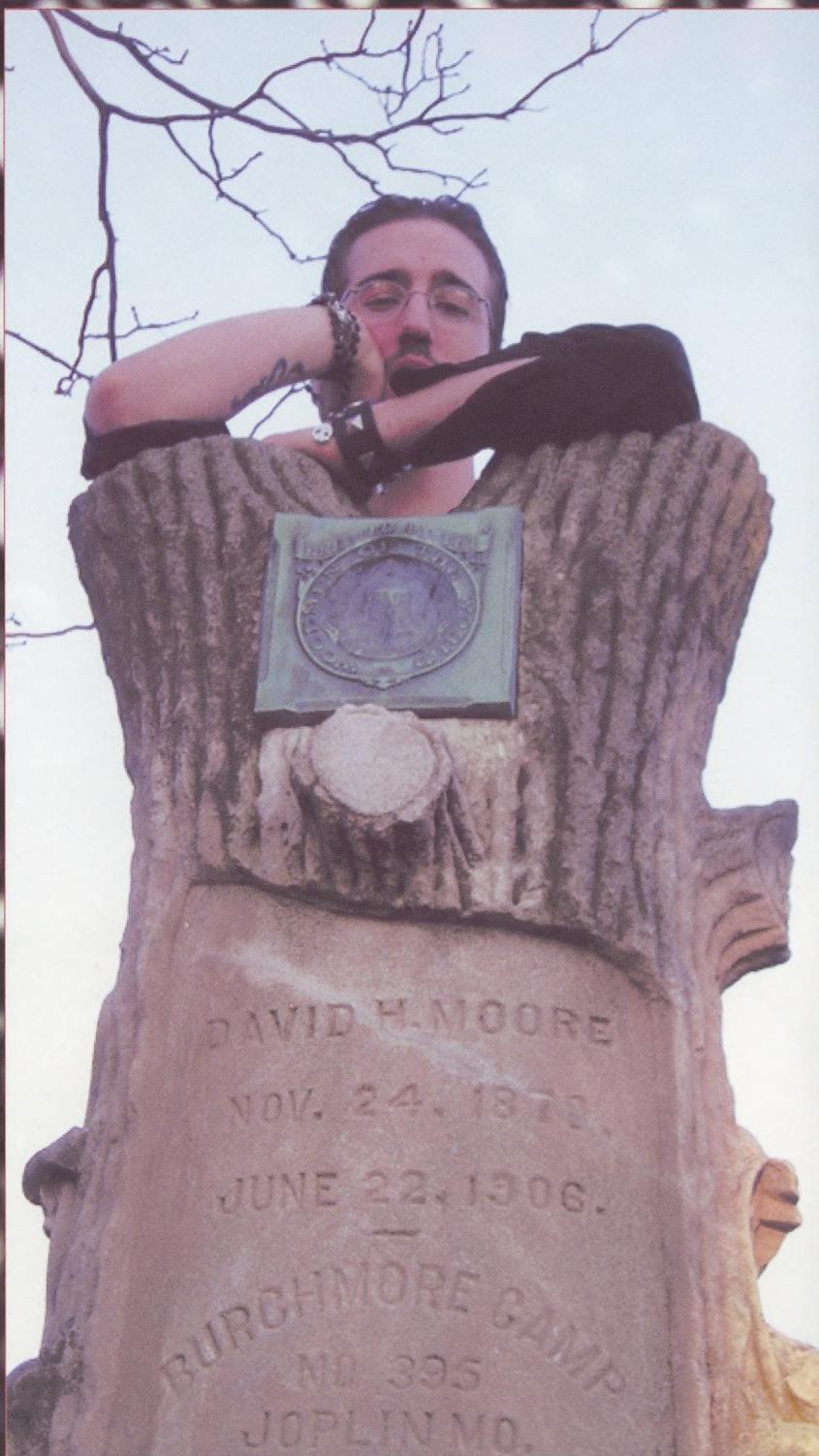
# Noctum



SNEAK THE NIGHT

# Children of the night speak out

Photos and Story  
By Melissa Dunson



Nate Lee, Granby, shares his insight of what people see when they look at Goth fashion.

Five figures, draped in black, huddle together in a cemetery hidden by the falling night. These friends aren't waking the dead or learning ancient hexes, just hanging out, enjoying the weather and remarking on the outdated names gracing the tombstones like, Minerva and Eunice.

"I think what sets people off is the black," said Nate Lee, Granby. "People think if you dress in black, they assume you're a Satanist."

Lee and his four other graveyard companions, Elizabeth Stockton, Granby, and Coni Kitts, Dani Zacmy and Mikka Smith, all of Joplin, are Goths, a much talked of and even more misunderstood community of diverse fashionistas and geeks who embrace the darker side of life along with the light.

"It's a fascination with the occult part of life, the hidden part," Stockton said. "It's that feeling of loving to be scared, the feeling you get when you watch a horror movie or ride a roller coaster."

Gothic culture was established in the 1970's, and has long been a haven for the misfits, outcasts and oddities of society.

But in the last decade, Goth culture has been drawn grudgingly into the popular view through such events as the Columbine school shooting and the popular Matrix film trilogy.

The populous' response was mixed, and Goths who were content to dwell in the shadows they felt they had been relegated to, were met with a mixture of poseur glam Goths who adopted the aesthetic of the Gothic look without the ideals and an outraged heartland of parents



Goth culture was introduced to Coni Kitts, Joplin, by her father through bands like The Cure and Joy Division.

and politicians condemning them as a menace to society and the proprietors of every major evil faced by society.

Goths are neither saviors nor demons and yet are held up as both. Stockton describes the Gothic philosophy not as morbid or depressing, but as embracing the totality of the human experience in a realistic way that can stare into the ugliness without blinking.

"I'm optimistically pessimistic, realistic one way or the other," she said. "There's more to life than being happy."

The group believes everything else in Goth culture is derived from this attitude that accepts darkness in the pursuit of a fuller, more felt, life.

The most noticeable attribute of the traditional Goth is the predominantly black clothing and make-up. The dark wardrobe serves a variety of purposes. For Stockton, whose complexion is fair and skin

extremely sensitive, the head-to-toe black functions as a protective shield and over time she has learned to enjoy the powerful aesthetic black provides.

In author Nancy Kilpatrick's popular book *The Goth Bible* she emphasizes that the black is a consequence of the spirit of a Goth.

"For most Goths, fashion reflects

**"Without pain, there is  
Neither the desire, nor the  
ability to create."**

*Maynard James Keenan*

Stockton considers herself a Victorian Goth and refers to her love for that time period and to England's Queen Victoria (1837) who wore all black everyday for the 40 years after her beloved husband Albert died. She coined the costume's title "Widow's Weeds."

an aesthetic that permeates their entire existence," Kilpatrick wrote. "It's a thought process, a reality base, a way of life that includes what you wear as an expression of a deeper realm embraced on a soul level."

Not all parents respond well to



Coni Kitts, Joplin shows her dark side that some suspect is satanism or depression, but what she and other goths call realistic pessimism.

**"First you have to give up,  
first you have to know, not  
fear, know...that someday  
you're going to die."**

**Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt), *Fight Club***

the sudden descent into fashion darkness. Stockton was raised in a strictly conventional Pentecostal Christian home and when she began to dress differently her father took her entire wardrobe and threw it in the trash.

Other Goths were introduced to the genre by parents who grew up in during the cultural birth of the community and eventually decided to dress like grown ups.

Smith said her mother will dress up in Goth clothing and makeup and go to Goth concerts with her as a way of showing her acceptance of her individual expression and still provide parental input and protections.

"My dad introduced me to all of this stuff," Kitts said. "He got me listening to The Cure. And my mom owned a corset at one time."

In Kilpatrick's book, she asks 125 questions about everything Goth to 95 Goths worldwide. She compiled the responses and attempts to de mystify the melodrama of what it means to have a Gothic soul.

She labels Goth an artistic movement, along with many other things, because it permeates so much more than fashion. Music is a founda-

tional element of the Goth culture.

"We are a culture defined by our artists," Lee said.

Typically Goth music cannot be too happy because there are so many sad things to sing about and it can't be too mainstream or else it loses its appeal, but besides those criteria the music Goths listen to is incredibly diverse. Kitts listens to punkabilly and psychobilly like Royal Crowns and 12 Step Rebels, Smith listens to everything from

AFI, HIM and The Cure to addictively danceable Franz Ferdinand and cheesy 90's dance band Aqua, Lee prefers darker rock that is "not just singing for the sake of singing" and includes Metallica, Tool, A Perfect Circle and Our Lady Peace, Zacmy listens to stereotyped heavy Goth bands like Marilyn Manson and Nine Inch Nails, and Stockton gravitates more toward the lighter, more ethereal sounds of ambience style Goth like Evanescence.

Smith said that although many people automatically label her as a troubled teenager who must abuse drugs and alcohol, she prefers purity to stimulants.

"When you do that stuff you are literally poisoning your body," Smith said.

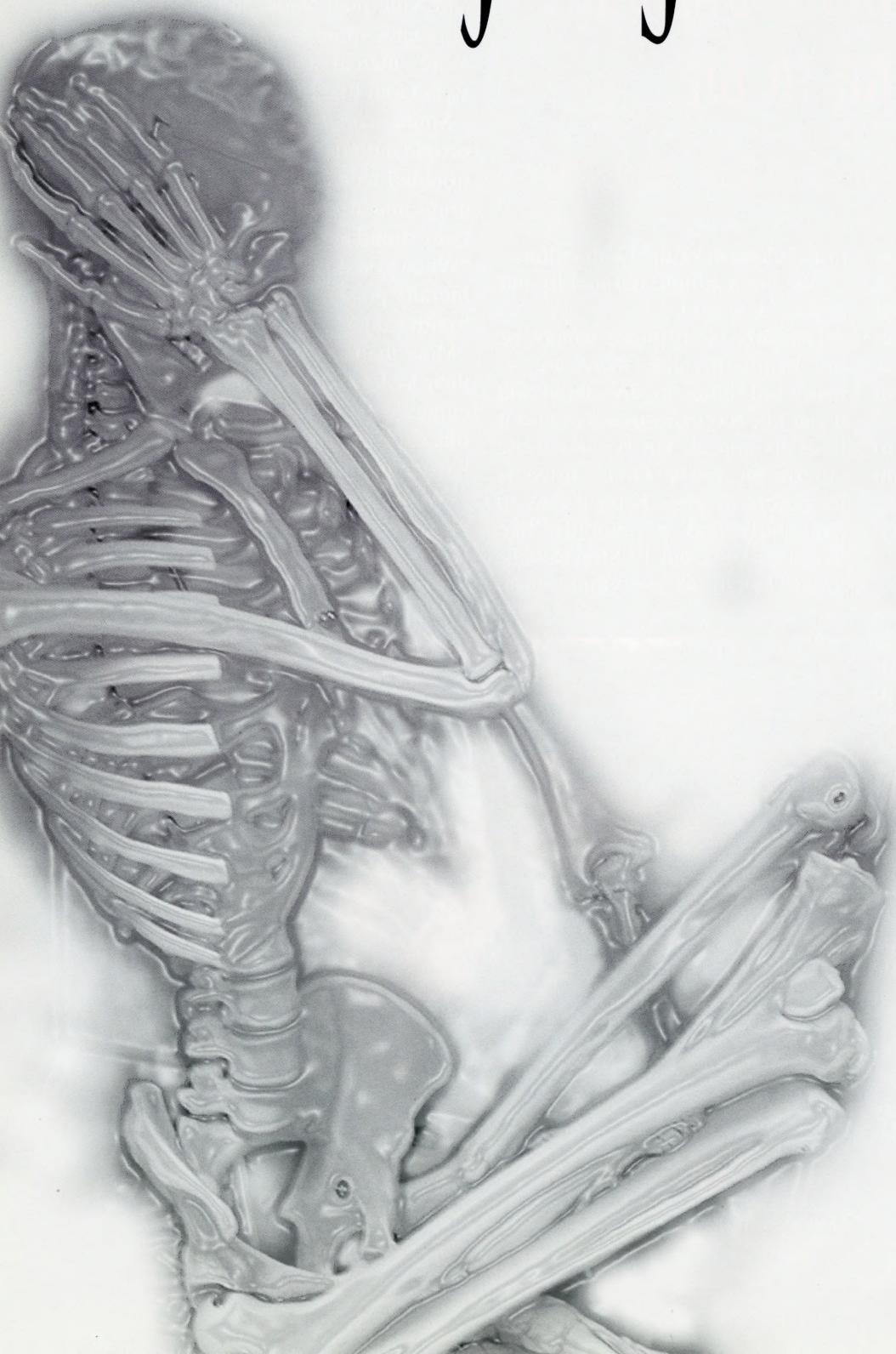
More than anything the goths said their look isn't meant to be frightening, just a representation of their inner selves and the revelation they have at that moment.

"We indulge in the forbidden pleasures of what it means to wallow in artistic and erotic darkness," Kilpatrick asserts in her book.



Mikka Smith, Joplin, and Elizabeth Stockton, Granby, at a favorite cemetery hang out.

Dying to be thin



By Jessica Bogle

# Starvation has many causes, one end

It begins as a token indulgence, something controllable, and grows into a faceless, nameless monster that aches and continually requires more.

Anorexia affects many girls, women and men every year. It may begin simply as a desire to lose weight or to look more attractive, but it can lead to a serious illness that could damage not only a person's body and mind, but also relationships and the ability to function in society.

It may be surprising to know that men can suffer from it as well as women.

"In certain sports like wrestling and swimming, the men are required to be so incredibly lean that they get reinforcement for getting lighter and lighter because they want to stay in their weight class," said Dr. AmyKay Cole, psychology professor and clinical psychologist.

Although more than seven times the amount of women suffer from anorexia than men, the fact is that about one million men have reportedly been diagnosed with anorexia, according to the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders.

A person suffering from anorexia may be influenced to diet and lose weight from society, family or friends. Most of the sufferers start showing symptoms of anorexia from age 13-15, with 86 percent of all cases being reported before age 20. However, the age has been decreasing over the past few years. Dr. Cole believes this is largely due to the media and society, because of the expectations to look thinner than is healthy for a normal person. Family can also contribute to the problem.

"The mothers say, 'Do I look fat in this?' or they say, 'I feel terrible, I feel bloated, I feel fat' and they send this message to their daughters that 'Oh, I need to evaluate myself by my appearance, and thinner is better. I want to be pretty and...that's how to get pretty,'" Cole said.

While information about the disease and its warning signs can be helpful in breaking the eating cycle, information can also be dangerous in the hands of someone teetering on the edge of anorexia.

"The internet has created an additional problem," Cole said. "You can go to websites and learn more tricks of how to be a good anorexic."

The duration of anorexia is anywhere from one to fifteen years. Although some do recover completely, other sufferers have relapses later in life. Cole said that weddings and pregnancies can throw a woman who has struggled with anorexia in the past into a relapse that may be worse than the original illness. She tells these women to seek treatment again during pregnancy simply because at that point, they are very vulnerable to it. It is disturbing to these women to see their abdomens change as they do when they were so focused on losing weight in that area previously.

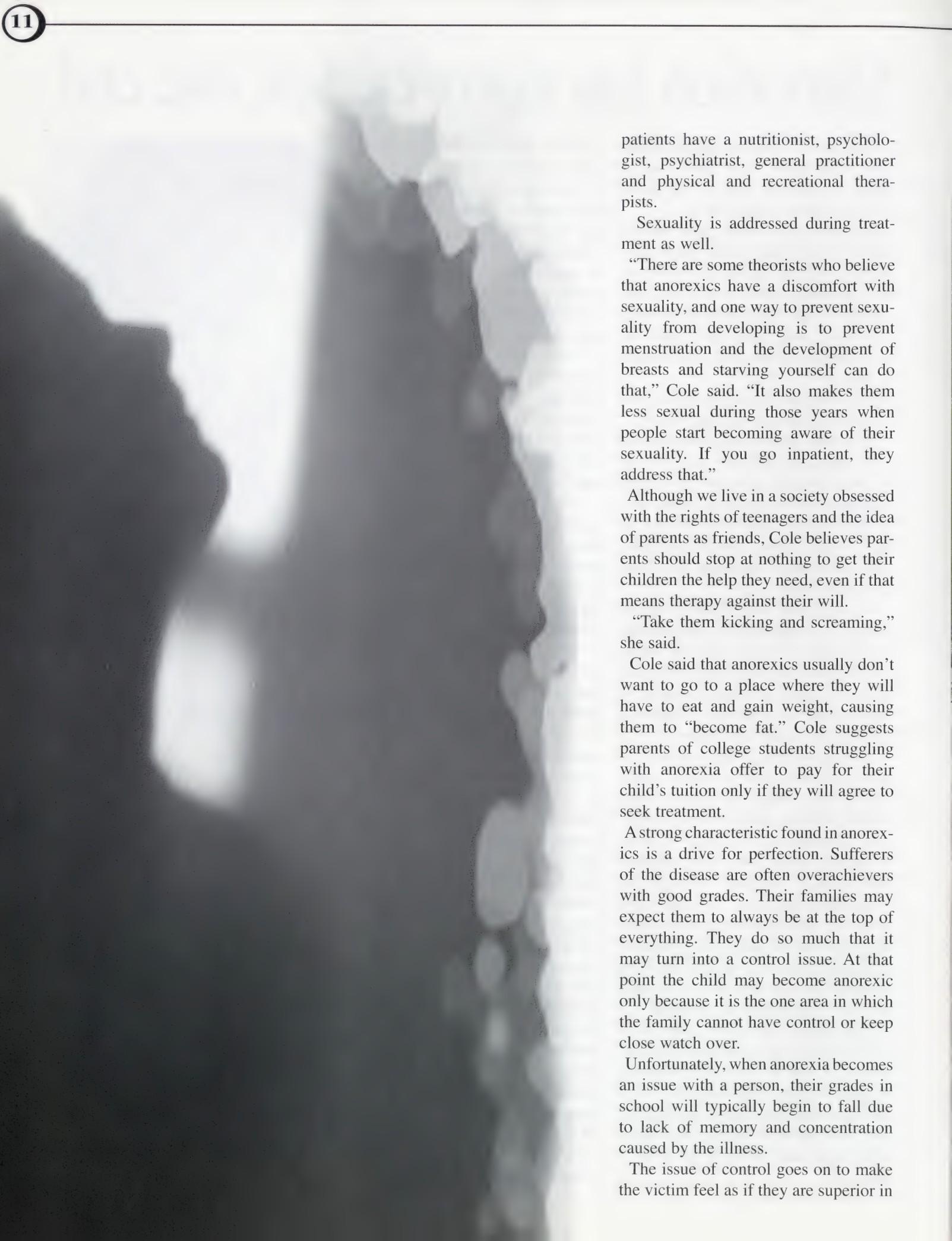
Inpatient treatments are most effective in combating anorexia and often required by doctors or psychologist. However, these treatments can cost thousands of dollars. The ANAD believes that since 86 percent of the victims are diagnosed by age 20, there should be more preventative programs for young girls.

The inpatient treatments usually have a multidimensional approach, where



"Anorexia is just another word for nothing to lose."

~ Joy Behar



patients have a nutritionist, psychologist, psychiatrist, general practitioner and physical and recreational therapists.

Sexuality is addressed during treatment as well.

"There are some theorists who believe that anorexics have a discomfort with sexuality, and one way to prevent sexuality from developing is to prevent menstruation and the development of breasts and starving yourself can do that," Cole said. "It also makes them less sexual during those years when people start becoming aware of their sexuality. If you go inpatient, they address that."

Although we live in a society obsessed with the rights of teenagers and the idea of parents as friends, Cole believes parents should stop at nothing to get their children the help they need, even if that means therapy against their will.

"Take them kicking and screaming," she said.

Cole said that anorexics usually don't want to go to a place where they will have to eat and gain weight, causing them to "become fat." Cole suggests parents of college students struggling with anorexia offer to pay for their child's tuition only if they will agree to seek treatment.

A strong characteristic found in anorexics is a drive for perfection. Sufferers of the disease are often overachievers with good grades. Their families may expect them to always be at the top of everything. They do so much that it may turn into a control issue. At that point the child may become anorexic only because it is the one area in which the family cannot have control or keep close watch over.

Unfortunately, when anorexia becomes an issue with a person, their grades in school will typically begin to fall due to lack of memory and concentration caused by the illness.

The issue of control goes on to make the victim feel as if they are superior in

# Side Effects

the area of looks and weight, comparing themselves to pictures of models. However this is a deception because of the many physical problems occurring in response to anorexia.

"Even when their knees are nobbing and their hip bones are sticking out, they still say 'look at my stomach, look at my thighs!' Their minds are filled with how many calories they've consumed and how many calories they've burned," Cole said.

The disease affects all parts of the body and the side-effects can be life threatening. Cole urges anyone who suspects a friend or family member is struggling with anorexia to confront the person with caution.

According to Missouri Southern State University's Student Support Center, a person suffering from an eating disorder should not be approached alone. It would be best to confront them with another mutual friend who has noticed the same symptoms. Then, offer to attend counseling with them or see other therapists.

It is better for the person to get help sooner rather than later. When the symptoms are clear enough to others for them to become concerned, the illness has already progressed too far.

A helpful resource for someone suffering from anorexia or preparing to confront a friend or family member about a problem with anorexia is the Words of Wisdom Counseling Center, 500 E. 32<sup>nd</sup> St., Ste. 1, Joplin, Mo., Remuda Ranch, 1-800-445-1900, a treatment center with a non-denominational Christian perspective. Books available are *The Monster Within: Overcoming Eating Disorders* by journalist Cynthia Rowland McClure, a book that chronicles the author's struggle with bulimia, *The Body Betrayed: A Deeper Understanding of Women, Eating Disorders and Treatment*, by Kathryn J. Zerbe, explaining some of the contributing factors to eating disorders.

Anorexia affects the body in many extreme ways. Here is a list of just a few ways major areas of the body are affected, adapted from the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders:

### **Central Nervous System:**

- Difficulty concentrating
- Depressed mood
- Preoccupation with food and weight

### **Heart**

- Slow, irregular heartbeat
- Dizziness or faintness due to low blood pressure
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain

### **Genito-urinary**

- Tired
- Cold intolerance
- Thinning hair, possibly falling out
- Low blood sugar

### **Mouth**

- Enamel erosion
- Cavities and/or gum disease
- Swollen salivary glands
- Sore throat

### **Esophagus**

- Painful burning
- Vomiting blood
- Risk of rupture

### **Stomach**

- Discomfort and bloating after eating
- Severely painful abdomen due to gastric rupture after vomiting
- Electrolyte imbalance that leads to confusion and cardiac arrest

### **Intestine**

- Frequent constipation

psst...  
over here...



# CROSSROADS

The Magazine

...so much fun, it  
should be illegal

# plastic society

By Auriel Brown



# Battle rages over reality shows' effects

Women in America spend millions of dollars every year on beauty products and material items in order to feel good about themselves and in other cases, to impress others. When all of that effort still doesn't fix the "problem," women are left looking for another solution.

How often do women turn on their television to be visually assaulted by someone flawlessly glowing from head to toe compliments of plastic surgeons and professional stylists?

Reality television shows that include cosmetic and other forms of surgery are becoming more popular among viewers, particularly women. This new phenomenon has sparked an interest and an imagined need for many women to go under the knife in search of physical perfection. While some people tune into these shows for mere entertainment, others may view themselves as inferior unless they rise to the standards of what is considered to be "beautiful" by primetime TV.

ABC's hit show, "Extreme Make-Over," is one of the first of its kind. On this show thousands of men and women send in tapes disclosing their physical flaws and insecurities and try to impress the judges with their need for a change through plastic surgery. Once two lucky contestants are picked, the show's "Extreme Team" is brought in consisting of stylists, trainers, health experts, and the main ingredient, the plastic surgeons to assist the contestants in becoming more confident, attractive people.

Fox, not to be outdone, launched the reality series, "The Swan", that generally follows the same procedures of "Extreme Make-Over", but takes their main objective a bit further. In this case each "ugly duckling" is brought before a panel of beauty, health and cosmetic special-

ists and each takes a turn pointing out features that need to be fixed. At the end of this three month transition of plastic surgery, exercising and dieting with absolutely no access to a mirror, the newly changed contestant is allowed to see their reflection as a new person. Then the contestant has the chance to be entered into a beauty competition for the chance to be crowned the ultimate "Swan".

Both of these shows could be looked at as women celebrating a new beginning and sharing it with the world or it can be viewed as society and the media encouraging women to be vain. Either way it raises the question of whether or not reality television shows focusing on physical alterations has a negative effect on the females who watch them.

Dr. Amy Kay Cole, psychology professor at Missouri Southern State University, said she feels that the shows' emphasis on the physical body makes people feel inadequate.

"I think it decreases the focus on personal attributes and strengths and increases the importance of superficiality," Cole said.

Cole said that in society the theory is "what's beautiful is good." She points out that people tend to assume that because someone is attractive they must be smarter, happier and psychologically healthy.

Dr. Frank W. Shagets M.D., plastic surgeon at the Facial Aesthetic and Laser Center said that he agrees that these reality shows have highlighted physical imperfections.

"I think it [the shows] makes women more critical of the features they have that others may perceive as less than ideal," he said.

Shagets, said he gets between five and ten patients a week seeking some sort of cosmetic change. While the majority of Shagets patients want



facelifts, he said his younger patients are more interested in nasal changes such as rhinoplasty.

Unlike "The Swan," Shagets says his patients usually come in knowing exactly what they want and he does not give suggestions unless the procedures the clients want will adversely affect their desired results.

Cole insists women need to understand when they look at the reality television shows what they see is not completely realistic, because no one looks like the show's subjects once they are at home.

"Even after the surgery, they have someone to do their hair and makeup for them," she said.

Shagets said he feels that the shows are fair in their depiction of what plastic surgery is about and pointed out the shows do reveal the swelling and bruises that accompany any type of surgery.

In spite of what some people view as misleading about the show, others see it as an opportunity to make people's lives better. Nancy Hight-Morris, senior criminal justice major, said that the people that are picked to be on the show do seem to have legitimate reasons for wanting a change.

"You can tell that their self-esteem is at its lowest level," Hight-Morris said.

But Hight-Morris realized that the shows are more to the cosmetic surgeons' benefit.

"Cosmetic surgeons

make more money," she said. "It's good advertisement and good P.R. spinning."

While Hight-Morris said she does acknowledge that shows like "The Swan" and "Extreme Make-Over" can place a seed in someone's mind that they ought to seek change, one should realize that you are who you are regardless.

"There are actually a lot of ugly people who are truly beautiful people inside".

**"If anybody says their facelift doesn't hurt, they're lying. It was like I'd spent the night with an axe murderer."**

-Sharon Osbourne





## 10 important Q's to answer

With the substantial cost of plastic surgery and the health risks it is important to ask good, pointed questions to discover what is the right treatment for each individual.

1. What percentage of the doctor's practice is cosmetic versus reconstructive plastic surgery?
2. Does the doctor limit himself to, or have a special interest and experience in, cosmetic surgery of the face and neck?
3. How long has the doctor been performing the procedures you are considering?
4. Is the doctor board certified?
5. Is the doctor a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons?
6. Is the doctor a member of local, state and national medical societies?
7. Are typical "before and after" photos made available for your viewing should you so desire?
8. Does the office provide "computer imaging" to help you appreciate the anticipated results of your procedure(s)?
9. Does the office provide, at the consultation, an itemized "fee quotation sheet," listing all proposed services and charges?
10. Does the office offer a financing program?

# HIDDEN COMMUNION

נ' מבסם דקים ע' גופשי ד'. ס' כדי לשורר זרים. ה' אל  
אל מהונומים י' גומ מהונומים לא שרו זר. אך אונז  
ה בסעה א' והז' בשרה א' וחצ'י התכנסנו למסיבת  
ח' שחורה. נעים ע' שחורי. נעים היה ליראות אונז ח'  
ס. ביד אחת הם. ביד אחת הרימו את הבן וכשנ'י  
החילים שהוז ההיילם שחורי סיפרו במסיבה זו  
אה שאפיאלו ד. אה שאפיאלו ד. התברג. הבתוי על



# Joplin Jews seek refuge in holy temple

By Jesse Millican

Since A.D. 70 when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem to the four or five million Jews massacred during the holocaust, people of the Jewish faith and heritage have undergone immeasurable persecution and continue to be discriminated against.

In light of their tumultuous history it is not surprising modern Jews keep a low profile in the “Bible belt” of southwest Missouri.

While being among the oldest houses of worship in Joplin, the United Hebrew Congregation is among the least known.

Even though it is not known about by most of the residents of Joplin, this small congregation has a rich history.

“There have been Jews in Joplin since the early 1870s,” said Dr. Paul Teverow, history professor at Missouri Southern State University. “This particular congregation was organized in 1912. Construction of the temple was started in 1916, and the first service was held in 1917.”

While the congregation in Joplin has existed here many years, very few Southern students attend the temple in Joplin. This is because very few Jewish students attend Southern.

“I think we need to get the University to get more positive press to get more Jewish students down here,” said Evan Coblitz, freshman undecided major.

There can be many reasons for the size of the congregation in the temple, but most of the reasons relate to the history of Joplin. “Joplin was once a more important town, and more prosperous than it has been, so Jewish people came



into Joplin to primarily run retail businesses,” Teverow said. “So I would imagine at its peak the congregation had between 125 to 150 members.”

Others have a different opinion about the lack of new members joining the congregation in Joplin, and tend to see things more as a problem of perception about the area itself.

“The temple is kind of struggling because of bad press, because people think it is racist down here,” Coblitz said. “So not many Jewish people come here to Joplin.”

“So on the one hand in the twenty years since I have been here there are several Jewish faculty at Southern that have become part of the congregation,” Teverow said. “Considering the size of this university, considering the size of the Jewish community in Missouri, we don’t have many Jewish students attending the temple.”

Camp Crowder, located in Neosho, once had a great effect on not only the city of Neosho, but also on the surrounding area. This military, once larger than it is now, brought many people into the area near Joplin. The effect was also felt by Joplin’s Jewish congregation.

“I have heard stories from some of the older members that around the 1940s and 1950s you would see a lot of soldiers from Camp Crowder attending Jewish holidays,” Teverow said. “But even before Camp Crowder was established it was a sizable congregation.”

Some Jewish people living in the “Bible-Belt” take the



strain in different ways, and develop varying ideas of things that are wrong about how Christians relate to them.

"Where do Christians get off telling Jews that they are going to hell when Christianity comes from Judaism," Coblitz said. "I was at a wedding where the preacher was talking about how Jews are going to hell. There was almost a riot because half the people there were Jewish. Christians should learn a lot more about the origins of their religion within Judaism."



By Melissa Dunson

The United Hebrew Congregation, 702 N. Sergeant Ave, Joplin, was completed in 1917, and is the only Jewish Temple in the Joplin area. During the building's early years, it boasted a congregation 150 strong.

Christianity is basically a branch off of Judaism."

Stereotypes can also lead to much stress for the few Jewish students at Southern, especially when it involves those misconceptions people have if they have never met anyone of the Jewish faith before.

"Everybody needs to stop saying that people don't look or act Jewish," Coblitz said. "Judaism and Hebrew is not a dead religion and language and should not be treated as such."

Being a reform congregation, there are some differences between the United Hebrew Congregation and other synagogues within the Jewish faith.

"It is the most liberal branch of Judaism," Teverow said. "It's different in a number of respects. It's different in that we don't necessarily in a religious basis consider the observances binding. For example, the dietary laws, the beliefs that certain types of meat should be kept apart, now a growing number of reform Jews actually do that, but that was one of the bases for reformists to go on their own within Judaism."

The way the temple service is run in reform Judaism differs from that of an Orthodox service in many ways that may not be known to someone not from a Jewish background.

"The service of the Orthodox congregation would be primarily in Hebrew," Teverow said. "About fifty percent of reform services are in Hebrew. I would say up to about thirty years ago the whole service would have been in English. So reform Jews felt that worship should be conducted in the language that is understood. Of course in reform synagogues, men and women sit together instead of sitting apart."

For those interested in attending a service within the reform temple there is little worry of people finding you strange or an outsider.

"I think if you (non-Jew) were to attend an Orthodox service people would find it strange if you were there and not doing all the things they did, if you didn't recite things," Teverow said. "So yeah, I think reform would probably be more welcoming. Probably most reform and conservative Jews wouldn't object to having a visitor in the congregation, but I guess the one thing reform Jews would insist on is a visitor who kept coming and saying 'this is for me' would at some point make a formal commitment."





# Shattered Lives

Cover photo by Scott Walters

# Drunk driving affects more than driver, victim

By Kristie Rader

Carol Peck, Tom and Judy Johnston, Susis Williams, Mike and Amy Mann, and millions of other people in Missouri and around the country all have something terrible in common.

They have lost loved ones in a drunk driving incident. The saddest part is not the permanent emptiness inside of them, but that the people they loved so dearly did not have to die. Those loved ones could still be here today just as healthy and vibrant as they were before, if on that one tragic day, one person had made the decision to not get behind the wheel after drinking.

However, that was not the case for Wayne Peck who died the night of July 4, 2003, Tommy Johnston who was buried the day before his eighteenth birthday, Laura Williams who never even finished high school, or seven-year old Jessica Mann and her grandfather Jim who were minding their own business in their driveway.

They were all killed by drunk drivers. Now all that is left are memories and pictures, sorrow and a void in so many hearts because their lives have been reshaped forever.

The Victim Impact Panel, an organization of MADD (Mother's Against Drunk Driving) out of Carthage meets on the second Saturday of every month. These mothers and their families come together to tell their stories to DUI offenders in hopes of changing the minds of those who made the decision to drink and drive.

The three-hour program is held in the Criminal Justice Auditorium at Missouri Southern and all of the members encourage supporters and visitors to attend at no charge.

The members' stories are life changing and touch the heart in an uncommon way. Judy Johnston told her story of the night an officer came to her door in the late hours of the night to tell them that their son Tommy had been killed in a

car crash involving a drunk driver.

"Tom met us in the hall and said, 'We need to talk,'" Johnston said. "I kept thinking it was a mistake. That it wasn't really my child, just someone who looked similar."

The level of loss expressed in these meetings by families who have suffered so tremendously cannot be conveyed by any three-hour program.

There are also many cases of people involved in these drunk driving collisions that are lucky enough to survive the experience and tell their story. Unfortunately, their stories do not have to be told orally because their scars, disfigurements, disabilities and obvious struggle to regain what they lost because of someone else's lack of judgment tell the stories for them.

Consider the story of Jaime Murray, who was lucky enough to survive, but unfortunate enough to have his dreams ripped away from him. Jaime was an athletic young man and while riding his bike one early afternoon, he was hit by a seventeen-year old girl who was heading home after a night of drinking and partying at the lake that had continued into the morning hours. Jaime was in a coma for about 65 days and doctors did not expect him to pull through, but he did. Jaime had to relearn simple tasks like holding up his own head. He had to wear diapers and needed constant care from his family. Jaime had lost all of his independence and more importantly his love of being an athlete. He will never ride a bike again. Jaime may never get to experience many of the greatest moments in life, like marriage and a family and his life will never be what it could have been all because a 17-year-old girl thought she was all right to drive home after a night of fun at the lake.

Most people don't take the seriousness of drinking and driving into consideration until they are affected personally

by it whether as the drunk driver, the victim or a friend or family member of someone involved.

Many people believe they will never be involved in a drunk driving collision and as humans tend to think of themselves as invincible, but they are not.

In Missouri alone, there are approximately 400 people killed in drunk driving accidents each year and it is estimated that one out of every two Missourians will be involved in a drunk driving crash in their lifetime.

Those are disturbing but realistic numbers and no one is exempt from becoming a statistic.

Many times even when an individual thinks they are fine to drive, sometimes they aren't. The body's senses become distorted after just one drink, regardless of age, height, weight or whether the person feels intoxicated or not.

It is important for people to not rely on their brains to confirm when they have had too much to drink. By the time a person realizes they are impaired, the level of alcohol in the blood stream is so high that the brain is being deprived of oxygen and the individual is at a higher risk of getting alcohol poisoning.

This is what most of society associates being drunk with, the stumbling and slurred speech and loud, obnoxious behavior. In reality, those tell-tale signs are some of the last stages of being intoxicated. The first stage begins right after the first drink.

Many people who continue to drink and drive despite knowing the consequences justify their actions by the fact they have driven drunk before and never been pulled over or gotten into a wreck.

Others don't realize the seriousness

of a DUI on their records. In the state of Missouri, if someone is pulled over for driving under the influence, they are arrested and an automatic 15 day suspension is put on their license.

Once in court, most offenders are sentenced to attend a Victim Impact Panel at the cost of \$30 to \$50. This is just for first time offenders. Repeat offenders are eventually stripped of all driving rights and most do jail time and pay large fines that can start at \$1,000 and quickly exceed \$5,000 or \$10,000 after courts costs and lawyer fees.

The Victim Impact Panel and anyone who has lost a loved one to a drunk driving incident urges the public to think of the people the decision to drink and drive could affect in the long run. So many lives could be spared and more families could go on without the heartache.

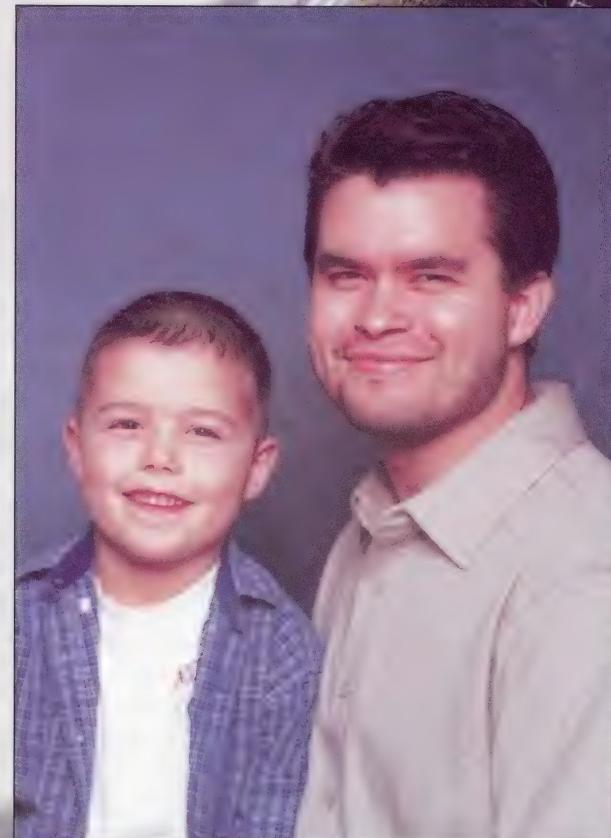
Something as simple as a designated driver could prevent the guilt of killing an innocent person. The consequences are easy to avoid if alcohol consumption is conducted with a little more pre-planning and some thoughtful and safe actions. Wayne Peck's mother, Carol states,

"These are not accidents," said Carol Peck whose son, Wayne, died from incident involving a drunk driver.

"These are violent crimes that can be avoided."

Submitted Photo

Wayne Peck and his son before Peck died as the result of a drunk driving incident.





Kristie Rader

Right, Multiple automobiles destroyed by drunk driving incidents can be found in any salvage yard anywhere in the United States.

Above, Memorial of Laura Lexion Williams who died April 9, 2000,

Automobiles are not  
ferocious ... it is man  
who is to be feared.

-Robbins B. Stoeckel

# Stuck inside for a while?

Read Crossroads  
online at

[www.mssu.edu/crossroads/](http://www.mssu.edu/crossroads/)





# SUSPENSION

Story by Melissa Dunson  
Photos courtesy of D.E.E.P. Suspension Team

# Suspensions explore personal awareness



Above, Hal Joplin, hangs in midair while being watched by a group of people at Punkteur tattoo and piercing studio. Rick Banks, suspender, said that everyone begins their experiences with suspension through gawking, so he encourages people to witness the rituals in the hope they will see the deeper meaning and possibly participate in the future.

Searing pain, metal forcing its way through layers of skin, then the skin goes taut and a final tug lifts you off of your feet, suspended.

"It's kind of like a tight hug because all of the skin is being pulled tight and it's like two banded arms around your chest holding you tight," said Rick Banks, body modifier and licensed piercer.

There are people willing to inflict themselves with pain, not because they are masochists, but because they believe it says something fundamental about themselves.

"Pain is just another boundary, another cage we put around ourselves, it's a fabrication of your own imagination and to willingly allow pain to be inflicted to your body is to say, 'pain no longer has a hold on me and I'm no longer bound by the restrictions of my body.' It's a way of saying, 'I'm my mind, not my body,'" Banks said.

To break through that boundary, many body modifiers choose to undergo a process called suspension where

**"When you open the flesh, you let something in."**

~Alex Binnie





John, Fayetteville, left, Eric, Rick Banks, Anna and April, all of Joplin, participate in a chest pull in the woods. Anna organized the ritual where the members also ate fruit, burned incense and drank juice to add to the meaning of the ritual act.

large metal fish hooks are inserted under the skin in a variety of places, cords are attached to the hooks and the person is suspended, either vertically or horizontally, from another object.

While some people may see the ritual as a perverse enjoyment of pain, Banks refuses to apologize for the absence of anesthesia and insists that while pain is present during suspensions, it is not the main focus.

"It's definitely painful and shocking at first," Banks said. "I think the pain and the shock should not be disassociated with suspensions and piercing and tattooing, because the pain is definitely something that is intentional. The pain allows you to own the experience. If tattoos didn't hurt, if we numbed the skin first, then everybody and their grandma would have them and they wouldn't mean anything."

The curious and open minded are encouraged to think of people who suspend as similar to someone who competes in an ironman competition.

Both require the participants to willingly submit themselves to stimuli that push their bodies to their emotional, physical and mental limits, specifically pain, in an attempt to see what they are made of.

That established, Banks said there are a variety of reasons sus-

pend and most of it has to do with what the suspender wants to get out of the experience.

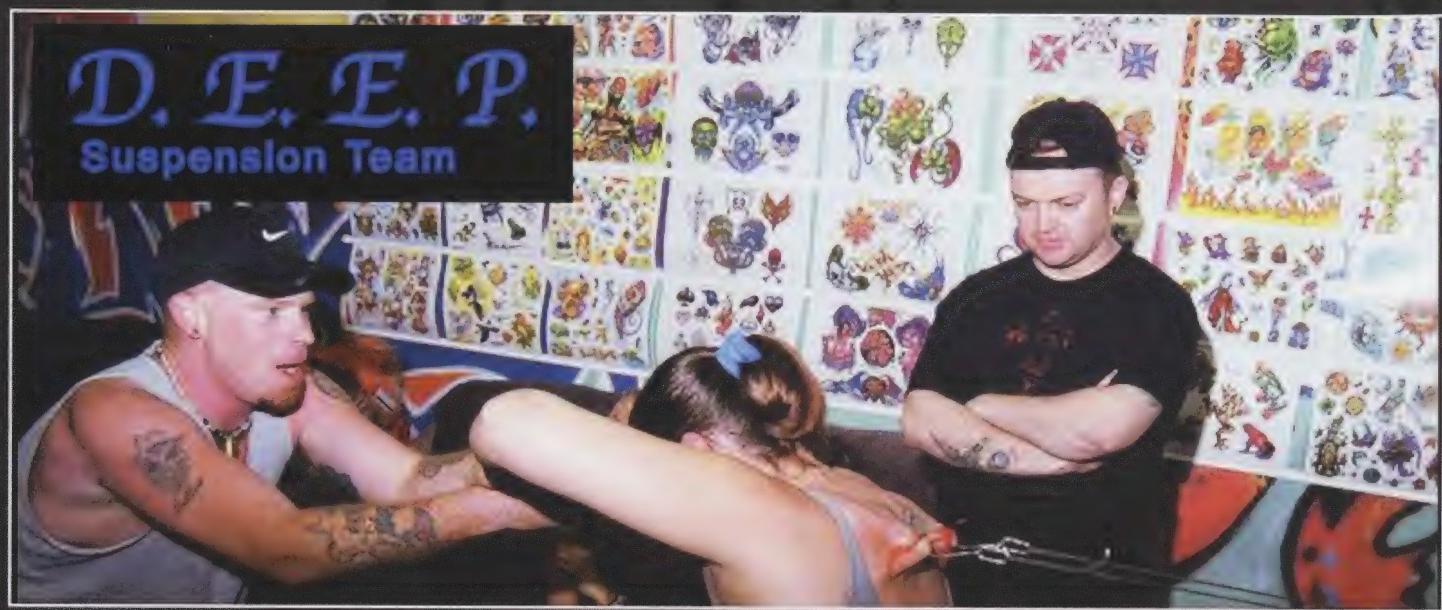
"Every individual person takes something different away from suspension," Banks said. "It can be a release of emotion, it can be a pivotal marking point in their life or some people use it to signify a different set of opinions or changing viewpoints."

For many people suspending represents the release of negative emotion and energy. Banks said while many suspenders prefer the privacy of a few close friends when participating in these ritual activities, others identify with the release of aggression found at suspension conventions.

"At suspension shows there's a loud rock band in the background, people suspending all around, people doing chest pulls and pulling cars with their



Rueben, left, and Lance, both of Joplin, participate in a suspension with Corey Sheppherd, owner of Punkteur tattoo and piercing studio.



Lance, Joplin, helps former suspenders participate in a back pull where the cords are attached to a stationary object and the subject pulls against the cords until the skin is pulled tight. Suspensions have been going on in Joplin and the surrounding area for several years, primarily organized through the local tattoo and piercing studios.

John, Fayetteville, removes hooks from his chest after a suspension. Different numbers and sizes of hooks are used depending on the persons weight and the desired suspended posture.



backs," Banks said. "A lot of people really associate with that aggression, with that loud output of energy and just that community."

Some people may compare it to the childish infatuation with sharp objects and the rebellious piercing of the ear with a safety pin, but Banks differentiates by pointing out the amount of thought and preparation that goes into these modern primitives' rituals.

"No one in the body modification community enjoys inflicting pain, no one's a sadist or a masochist," Banks said. "We try to perform the procedures with as little pain as possible. We try to be as precise in every case. We try to narrow exactly what the anatomy allows for and the direction of the skin, whether you want to pierce more vertically or angely. There's a lot of thought that goes into it."

Suspensions and other forms of body modification have been going on for hundreds of years and have their foun-

dation in ancient tribal rituals. An ancient Native American rite called O-Kee-Pa resembles a vertical chest suspension where hooks are placed in the chest and the body is hoisted upward with an arched back.

In Native American cultures, O-Kee-Pa was considered a rite of passage and a spiritual act. Another ancient version requires the participant to pierce the chest skin and then tie the hooks to a tree and lean against them until the hooks ripped free from the skin.

"What this did was to raise the endorphins and all the natural adrenaline," Banks said. "It puts you in a different state of mind, kind of a state of ecstasy. In this state the Indians would say they saw visions and I can't really verify this, however, there are a lot of people who've done this who say they've seen visions, so I wouldn't rule it out. I wouldn't know exactly if that would be hallucinating or if you



Raven Voss, Joplin, hangs in a back suspension at Punkteur Dec. 15, 2004.

want to put some kind of a spiritual context to it."

While Banks thinks there are many good reasons to consider suspension, he warns against the lure of over spiritualizing the act and putting the emphasis on finding god.

"Everybody has their own name they put on it, it's very difficult to limit that," he said. "Generally, body modification is oriented more toward getting to know yourself and revealing new areas of yourself rather than finding something else. I wouldn't want to insinuate or advertise this as a way to find god."

Banks thinks another bad reason to

begin a journey of body modification is for an image. In every area of pop culture there are groups of people who simply go through various motions to belong to an organization or community, some call them posers, Banks has his own term.

"We call these people 'rockstars.' They come to suspend and they just do it to get looks and to be cool and be goth and be something different than what they really are, and that's okay if you want to find a different person through suspension, but that's the difference, there are people who come looking for the image and people who say they have something they need to express and this is an appropriate time and place to do that."

The resurrection and growing popularity of suspensions is largely a result of the passions of one man: Fakir Musafar. Musafar is widely considered the father of the modern primitive movement and the individual who coined the phrase "body play" in reference to body modification. Musafar was born in 1930 on an Indian Reservation in South Dakota. He was highly educated with a B.S.E. in engineering from Northern State University and an M.A. in creative writing from San Francisco University, and considered very successful with high ranking executive positions in advertising agencies.

While his public life mirrored that of many, Musafar was privately prac-

ticing his personal form of reaching spirit through body by experimenting with play piercing, tattooing, scarring, branding, waist cinching and suspension.

Musafar's beliefs have greatly influenced the body modification community and revolutionized the thinking behind the rituals, adding a level of spirituality to the acts that was missing for many.

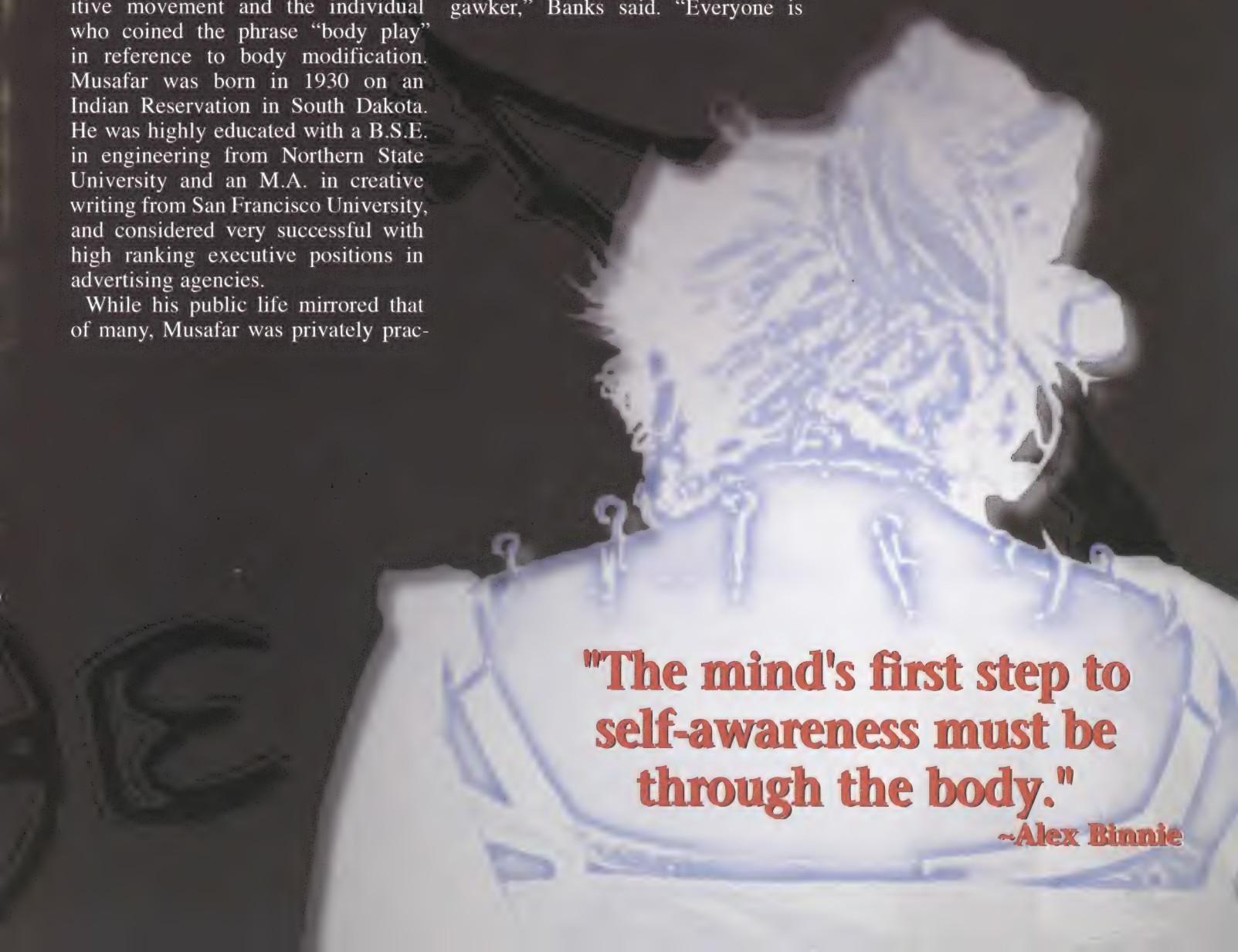
Suspension is legal when performed by a licensed piercer, but if someone "throws hooks" without a license in the state of Missouri it is considered assault.

Despite being continually demonized by all levels of society, suspension artists welcome the curious and the "gawkers" in the hope of perpetuating understanding and tolerance for a way of life many label immoral, unsafe or just plain strange.

"Everyone is going to start out a gawker," Banks said. "Everyone is

going to come to see something brand new and scary and different, but after awhile you realize why the people are there. You realize they're not there to be monstrous, they're not there to bleed on each other. I would say if you want to learn more about yourself – if you're curious to see what happens to your body when you reach these different stages of thought and meditation, then definitely, that's something you should know about yourself."

Banks warns against attempting a suspension without professional piercers trained in suspensions present. For more information on suspensions visit [www.bmezine.com](http://www.bmezine.com) or contact Punkteur tattoo and piercing studio at 1312 S. Main St., Joplin.



**"The mind's first step to self-awareness must be through the body."**

~Alex Binnie



# Backyard Outback

## Animal lover raises kangaroos

By Kristie Rader

"Omigod, Kanga just locked us out!"

Kanga is a three-year-old kangaroo, the most playful of the four Tabitha Bailey, Joplin, keeps in her home.

"Kanga, unlock this gate," Bailey screamed over the seven-foot privacy fence. Kanga did everything his Bailey told him not to do and made a point to leave her locked inside the pin shouting for someone to come outside and unlock the gate.

Bailey, who lives in a residential area, said her neighbors don't mind all the commotion.

"They just laugh," Bailey said.

The question remains, what kind of people really raise pet kangaroos in the middle of Joplin. Most people would hear the news and dismiss it all as a silly rumor.

Anyone curious enough to not take an unanswered doorbell as a no, can peak over the fence and get a glimpse of the hopping marsupials.

A man at the back entrance may surprise visitors as he whispers, "She doesn't really want anyone to know she has 'em."

Before meeting Bailey, one could conjure up images of a middle-aged woman who was balding and obese with no friends or family, just a bunch of kangaroos to occupy her time; the crazy cat lady with a twist. Preconceived notions fly out of the window when a young woman with a full head of blonde hair and a healthy looking figure, long red finger nails and a bright inviting smile introduces herself as the suspected crazy kangaroo lady. She doesn't look crazy at all. The more she talks about her beloved kangaroos, the more normal the entire situation sounds.

"They're just like dogs. Actually they're better than dogs," Bailey said.

Bailey and her husband have more than just kangaroos around the house. Her home menagerie contains the four kan-

garoos, two dogs, two cats, two flying squirrels, a hedgehog, a goose, two ducks, an Amazon parrot, a husband and four children, one of which is disabled. The top that, she also runs her own business and has a baby monkey and a buffalo on the way. Bailey makes it seem like it's all a breeze, while just being there and seeing it all happen is enough to stress out any visitor.

Bailey has always had animals in her life. When she took her family to Oklahoma on a day vacation, the owner of an exotic zoo ended up talking her into bringing a baby kangaroo home. From there they bought a female and had baby kangaroos of their own. They now have four kangaroos: two males, Kanga, who deviously locked Bailey out, and Jack who is a year old, and two females, Emma and Katie who are one and two years old and both expecting babies.

Bailey brings Katie inside for visitors to see. She stands







about his swing-set. Yes, Kanga has a swingset.

"[Kanga] likes his swing-set and he wanted his swing so he yanked [my nephew] clear off the swing."

Obviously, kangaroos can be very mischievous pets. While Bailey's husband was building a new fence, Kanga was constantly stealing the wood and running away with it to keep him from building. Bailey also enjoys dressing up her kangaroos in clothes and costumes and Katie won a Halloween costume contest one year. Kangaroos also like to swim and play in the water. The kangaroos actually kicked the ducks out of the small pond she has in her yard so that they could have it to themselves.

While the idea of having a pet kangaroo may seem attractive to some people, it's not for everyone. Those interested can expect to pay at least \$1,500-\$2,000 for one kangaroo, depending on the breed and sex desired. Proper housing is needed and they can't have a lot of grassy area, so rocks or pebbles are preferred in a space with small houses, heat lamps and a small patch of dirt for them to dig in and eat bugs out of.

Veterinarian bills can become expensive, especially if they develop what is known as "lumpy jaw." Kangaroos are prone to this disease that occurs when they eat too much coarse food such as straw or grass. It starts as an infection that will form lumps on the bottom of the kangaroos jaw. If ignored, the infection can move into the bloodstream and eventually kill the animal. Surgery is the only treatment and it doesn't run cheap. Kanga has had three surgeries for lumpy jaw and has racked up a bill of more than \$3,000. Bailey's veterinarian even had to call on The Crocodile Hunter, Steve Irwin, to figure out exactly what to do about Kanga's lumpy jaw.

Anyone owning a kangaroo should also be prepared to be the talk of the neighborhood and have a lot of people snooping around the property. Bailey constantly has people looking over her fences and snooping around her house, but she doesn't have to worry about anyone trying to steal the kangaroos because they are fast and hard to catch. They also don't mind boxing with strangers in their territory and they can pack a pretty good kick with their hind legs.

"If someone came over the fence, Kanga would probably get pretty upset," Bailey said. "He would fight with them and probably scare them off."

Kangaroos are not aggressive creatures, but they will protect their territory and are very capable of injuring someone, but overall they are very playful and gentle animals.

Kangaroos are fascinating animals that most people would never consider as pets, but Bailey and her family have made them just that. The crazy kangaroo lady was really exciting and informative. Bailey and her family are just like everyone else, they just have a special place in their hearts for more than just dogs and cats.

"We love all of our animals," says Tabitha, "they are just like our kids."

**"Elephants never forget, but  
you seldom see a  
kangaroo with a zipper."**

- Unknown

about two and half feet tall slouched over and her pouch hangs to the floor with a lump inside. It's her baby. Katie hasn't been pregnant long and they are expecting her and Emma both to have healthy babies around August. The only time the babies will leave the pouch before then is when their mothers remove them to clean out the pouch. During that time, the mother will teach them stand and balance on their tails.

Kangaroos are native to Australia and don't seem like they should adapt well to the cold weather during the winters in Joplin, but Bailey assures that with a warm bed and a small heat lamp they do just fine. Nonetheless, just like cats and dogs, it never hurts to bring them inside on the really cold nights.

As pets, Bailey almost swears by kangaroos. They all have their own personalities, likes and dislikes and are very intelligent animals. They can be house trained and Katie even has a favorite chair. Special kangaroo food is available out of New Mexico, but they are plenty happy with human food. While they're not big meat eaters, they do enjoy food ranging from bread and raw potatoes to ice cream and cookies. Bailey recently discovered that Katie even likes yogurt. The kangaroos can also have grass in light portions. The only thing they absolutely can't eat is grapes because their stomachs can't digest them.

Kangaroos also make good family pets. They will play and interact with other animals and children very well. They are rarely spooked and don't mind company, just don't try and steal their toys. Kanga has a brick he likes to throw around and enjoys fighting with a broomstick, but is very particular

# GOING NOMAD

"DIFFICULT TIMES HAVE HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND BETTER THAN BEFORE, HOW INFINITELY RICH AND BEAUTIFUL LIFE IS IN EVERY WAY AND THAT SO MANY THINGS THAT ONE GOES WORRYING ABOUT ARE OF NO IMPORTANCE WHATSOEVER" ~ ISAK DINESEN





# Volunteer chooses tent as home

By Melissa Dunson

There's no place like home, especially if it's burning to the ground while you watch helplessly in the fresh snow.

Lonnie Hoover, Joplin, was looking for love in all the wrong places. The second son born to parents who only wanted one boy and one girl, he quickly grew accustomed to rejection and mistreatment. When he was 12 years old, he was molested, a memory that still haunts him today.

"It affects all areas of your life," Hoover said. "It makes it very hard in trusting, dealing with and relating

with other people."

Hoover said the misconduct during his childhood created a young man who was convinced he was a bad person and only capable of doing bad things. He spun out of control and into a life of drugs, alcohol and countless bad choices.

"Its easier to list the things I didn't do than the things I did," Hoover said. "I never murdered anybody or committed armed robbery or rape. Everything else I probably did."

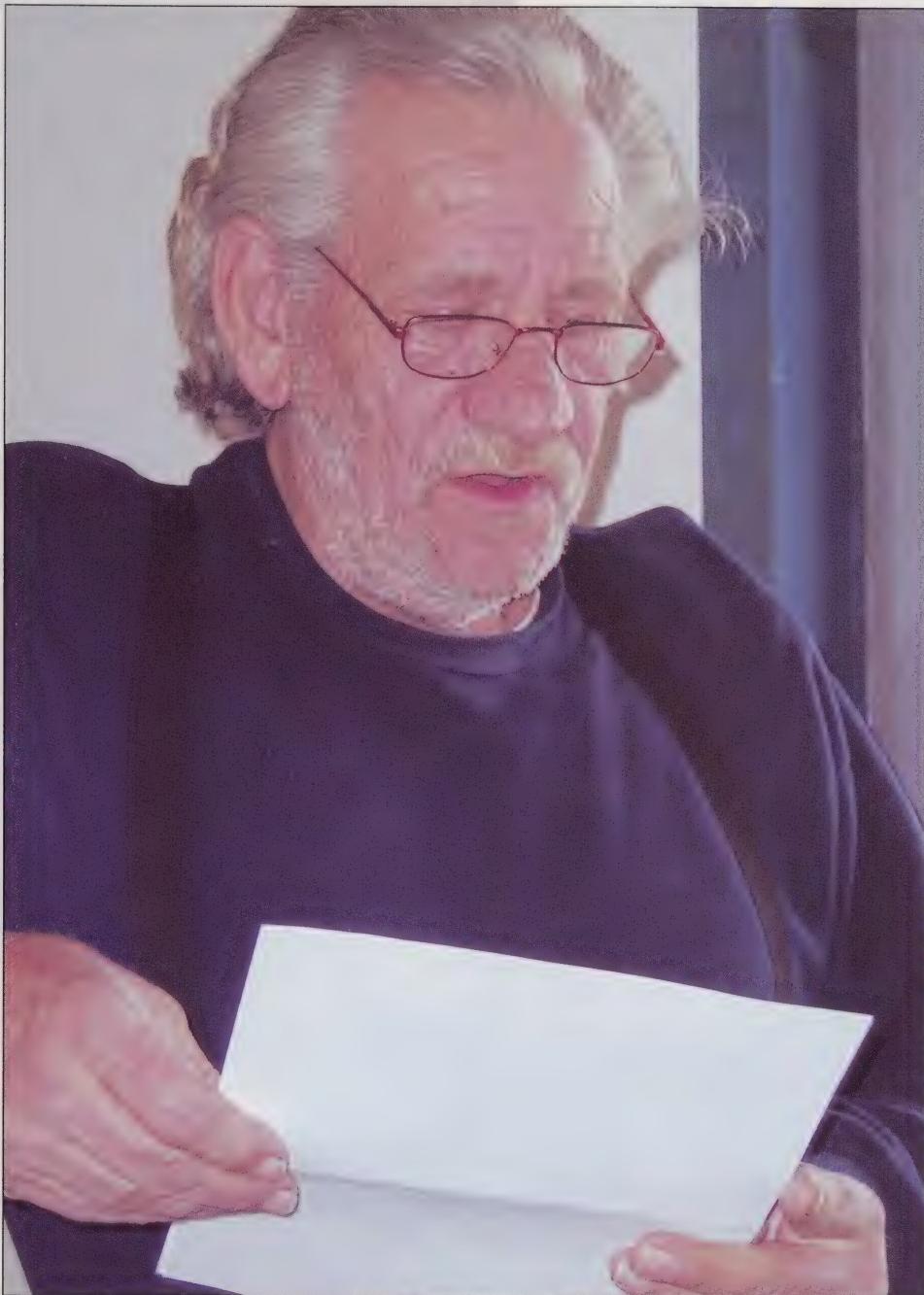
But Hoover said someone was watching out for him. Despite all of

his self destructive behavior, he continued to walk away from situations where he should have died.

By the time he was 18 years old, he had been in five serious car wrecks, each time traveling more than 85 miles per hour. He walked away each time with only minor bruising.

"God was watching out for me," he said. "He had something for me."

In the face of his close encounters with death Hoover retreated into the bottle and became a self-diagnosed alcoholic.



Melissa Dunson

**Above, Lonnie Hoover, Joplin, sold his parents' home and vehicle when they died and chose to live a homeless life. He volunteers at Watered Gardens, a shelter for the needy, four days every week.**

**Right, some businesses and landowners aren't happy about the idea of someone living in a tent on their property.**



"I was a drunk, alcoholic is the nice name for it, but I was a drunk," Hoover said. "As an alcoholic you have no control over your life, feelings or mouth. Alcohol is an escape and as an escape, it's the poorest one there is because it only makes things worse."

In 1978, Hoover's life changed forever when he walked into a church service and converted to Christianity.

"I was 37 years old and I count it as the first right decision I ever made," Hoover said.

Hoover suddenly felt free from the demons he had carried with him since his childhood.

"God forgave me and I felt like the world had been lifted off of my shoulders," he said.

The once alcoholic was suddenly not able to be in the presence of alcohol without becoming physically ill. This condition lasted for 11 years. Hoover credits the phenomenon to God and the fact he was too weak to resist old temptations placed before his face. Although he no longer gets sick when in the same room as a bottle of whiskey, he doesn't want to go back to his old life and therefore doesn't allow drinking anywhere around him

"God took it away from me, I never asked," Hoover said. "I don't need to drink now, it's no longer a compulsion, only an escape."

Even with his inner peace, Hoover was struggling to keep his life as a "bachelor father" of five children from falling apart. The stress was too much for him and Hoover's mind succumbed to a nervous breakdown that led to him being diagnosed with borderline paranoid schizophrenia and psychotic tendencies. Hoover said with God's help he no longer struggles with those conditions.

"I was trying to take too much on my shoulders rather than giving it to God," he said. "You have to decide whether you'll control your conditions or let them control you."

Years later Hoover felt compelled to accomplish what no one else in his family had been able to: graduate from college. He attended Crowder College intent on a two year degree in electronics. To motivate himself

through the difficult times, Hoover decided he would go to school to make his father proud, but in 1987, one month before he was to graduate, Hoover's father died.

"He [my father] was the whole reason I was going," Hoover said.

Devastated by the loss, Hoover still graduated with his hard sought degree only to watch his mother die two years later. Hoover said he tried to live as normally as he knew how, but became increasingly convinced of the pointlessness of much of the culture's requirements for success.

"I was tired of paying rent and working and going into the job market and being turned down for this reason or that," Hoover said. "I don't want to spend all of my life working for someone else."

Hoover began searching for an alternative to the lives he saw around him and in 1993 decided to go nomad. He sold his parents' house and vehicle, moved out of his rental property and into his truck and trailer. He would abandon the stationary life and drive around living out of his truck.

The plan suited Hoover's personality and everything seemed to be well until one night Hoover returned to his truck for the evening to find it and the trailer attached to it burning to the ground. Hoover stared in

disbelief, in the middle of the night and several inches of snow, at the remains of his former life.

"Everything I owned was in there," Hoover said. "All I had were the clothes on my back and my bicycle. All my pictures were in there, the pictures of my parents, you can't get those back."

To this day Hoover has no idea who was responsible for the fire or their reasons. With close to no earthly possessions, he made his way to The Salvation Army where he stayed for a week. The shelter provided Hoover with money to purchase a tent to live in.

Hoover settled his 10x12 foot domed tent in a wooded area outside of Joplin with a couple other men living in tents. The nomadic life suited Hoover's "primitive" tastes and Hoover spent most of his time praying, reading his Bible and sitting in front of his tent, summer and winter, observing the woods' various wildlife.

"It's about being able to do whatever I want to," Hoover said. "It's not so much what I actually do, but the fact that I have the freedom to do it."

Eventually Hoover's faith and lifestyle provided the opportunity for him to serve in what he considers his life work. After two of his

tent neighbors attended meetings at Watered Gardens, a small Christian organization focused on caring for Joplin's needy men and women, Hoover became interested and started observing the actions of the organization's founders and chief volunteers, Scott and Marsha Whitford. Hoover was impressed with the kindness and level of commitment the Whitfords expressed to a group of people most would avoid.

"I felt like I could belong here," he said. "What they're [Watered Gardens] doing is important. It's not the end for these people, it's the beginning."

Hoover thinks his particular experiences, especially his battle with alcoholism, makes him a valuable asset to the organization he now volunteers at a minimum of 20 hours per week.

"I know what they're going through," he said. "I know the agony of waking up in the morning and having the only thing on your mind be where can I find another bottle."

The once troubled and lost Hoover is now a familiar and friendly face at Watered Gardens, serving meals and carrying supplies and donations to needy families. He stands at the building's entrance and has the responsibility of locking and unlocking the building each day.

Marsha said in a place where things constantly change, Hoover's shining face and booming laugh have been a welcome and reassuring constant.

"He's really devoted himself to really participating, not just spectating," Marsha said. "He's just been a tremendous support. You want to know what a person's like from their heart, not from the way they look, not from the way they smell."

As for Hoover, he is completely convinced this is the mission his life was spared for and doesn't plan on going anywhere for a while.

"This is my family, I don't have any other," he said.

Hoover continues to live in his tent and does odd jobs for extra money. For more information on donations or volunteering, visit Watered Gardens at [www.wateredgardens.org](http://www.wateredgardens.org).



# THE FINAL FRONTIER

By Melissa Dunson



Melissa Dunson

**Ron Smith,**  
Pittsburg, member  
of the local Star Trek  
fan club, owns bind-  
ers full of signed  
Star Trek character  
photos including all  
but one signature  
from the cast of the  
original series.



Melissa Dunson

**Rachel Honeyball, Joplin, Norma and John DuBose,**  
Oswego, Kan., and **Ron Smith, Pittsburg,** are some of  
the members of the local Star Trek fan club.

# Trekkies defend their Sci Fi addiction

What do Bill Gates, Stephen Hawkins and Magic Johnson have in common? Besides being world famous, they are all members of an elite organization dedicated to exploring the depths of space and to boldly going where no man has gone before: Starfleet.

To husband and wife duo, John and Norma DuBose, Oswego, Kan., Star Trek is more than a popular television series, for them it is a way of life and a representation of all that is good and attainable in the world.

John and Norma are the driving force behind the area's official Star Trek fan club. Their chapter, or ship, is called "Dragon Strike" and consists of a handful of people from all ages, genders and backgrounds brought together by a uniting interest in the most successful science fiction series in history.

"I've been a fan since 1969, when I was three years old," John said.

Besides John and Norma, the core of the motley crew consists of Mike McWhirt, Pittsburg, a jovial, bearded man,

consumed by a passion for anime and Godzilla movies, May Orem, Oswego, John's mother, who takes charge with her dry sense of humor and even drier laugh, and two new faces, Rachel Honeyball, Joplin, a baby to Starfleet at the age of 19, and Ron Smith, Pittsburg, who has been a member of one Starfleet ship or another for the last 40 years and has in his tenured possession the autographed photos of all but one of the original Star Trek cast members.

Although the group is still considered a "shuttle" by Starfleet, they plan to apply for full ship status and take their hobby very seriously with titles, meetings and continuing education through Starfleet. John and Norma wear their hard sought Star Trek uniforms to the monthly meetings with pride.

"It's hard to find good uniforms these days," John said. "They're becoming more and more scarce. It's even hard to find them online now."

Starfleet is the international Star Trek fan club and was established in 1974 by a group of the show's enthusiasts

who refer to the series as "the greatest human adventure."

Often misunderstood and quickly labeled, the Starfleet members make easy targets for those with closed minds, including some of their idols. William Shatner, the actor who played Captain Kirk on the original Star Trek series, wrote the book *Get A Life* targeting his more avid fans. The book was interpreted as a slap in the face to Star Trek fans everywhere.

"Shatner had a bad attitude toward the fans and thought they were just some crazy freaks," John said. "Then he went to some conventions and the fans were asking him some really intelligent questions and it really changed his attitude."

John also thinks the release of the popular films "Trekkies" and "Trekkies 2" helped establish Star Trek fans as pathetic geeks instead of science fiction connoisseurs.

The DuBoses don't see their hobby as geeky, in fact, if it wasn't for Star Trek, John and Norma would never have met. Both were fans of the various series, but they didn't connect until they met on the internet and discovered their shared passion for all things Star Trek.

They were so grateful to find each other, soul mates of like mind, that they paid tribute to the thing that brought them together and had a Klingon bonding ceremony for their wedding. The couple couldn't get an ordained minister to perform the ceremony at The Star Trek Summit convention, so they were married in a small ceremony before the convention and then participated in the full dress Klingon bonding ceremony as part of the conventions activities.

"We had to wear these sashes and then we traded them so we each became members of each other's households," Norma said.

The fan club members don't take the costumes or the conventions too seriously and see the entire Star Trek pursuit primarily as a fun venture and said that hanging out with friends who share interests is the main goal.

While fun is the main intention, the Star Trek fans believe the show's effects reach much farther than entertainment goals and John thinks the space age tools used on the show have impacted inventions in the last 20 years.

"The hypo came directly from the series," John said. "The cell phone is really just a glorified tricorder. The idea



for MRIs originated on the show and NASA is looking into the possibility of an ion drive, something created for the show."

This driving force for knowledge expansion and a curiosity that asks the question "are we really alone in the galaxy?" were not only conceived in Star Trek during the 60's, but are continuing to intrigue and inspire a new generation of scientists and adventurers.

"A lot of people who work for NASA are also members of Starfleet," Norma said.

"Starfleet is a big proponent for expanding the space program," John said. "We're using up our natural resources and the chances are someday we'll have to find somewhere else to live."

In fact, Star Trek's legacy is so closely tied to actual

Submitted Photos

(Above and Below) John and Norma DuBose were married at a Star Trek Convention during a Klingon bonding ceremony.



space exploration and the idea of space travel in the collective imagination of entire generations that it was just given the honor of its own space in the National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C.

"Technology is following so closely to Star Trek, they thought it deserved a place," John said.

While Star Trek fans are often singled out as freaks and geeks, people from all walks of life and education levels put their faith in the ideals that Star Trek established.

"Some of the smartest people on the planet are Star Trek fans," John said. "Stephen Hawkins has gone on record saying he thinks the warp drive is possible."

The fan group also thinks the social constructs depicted in Star Trek have implications for a society John believes is moving more toward a utopian like service based mentality.

"They created a world where wars end and sickness is gone," John said. "There's always possibilities if you have the imagination. I have to believe there's something more."

While some may say the fans take the show too seriously, Starfleet members wish to mimic the series and "present a universe where people of all races work together to solve common problems." John and Norma aren't fazed by other people's doubts in the power of their favorite show and said every great discovery in history has been followed with laughter from unbelievers.

"Twenty years ago people thought interracial marriage was taboo and gays were looked down on," John said. "Look where we are today. Why discriminate? To each his own, I like what I like and you like what you like."

John takes that same attitude toward people who poke fun at his sci fi addiction. He takes the hits with a laugh and comes back swinging, that same giant grin plastered on his face.

"It's [Star Trek] been going on for 50 years and it will still be in when your dad is out," John said.

While John has attended 30 to 40 Star Trek conventions and holds a commander's title, there is still one Star Trek goal he yet attains to and that dream is his final frontier.

"Someday I want Leonard Nemoy [Spock] to walk up to me, hold out his hand and say, 'live long and prosper.' Then I can die happy," he said.

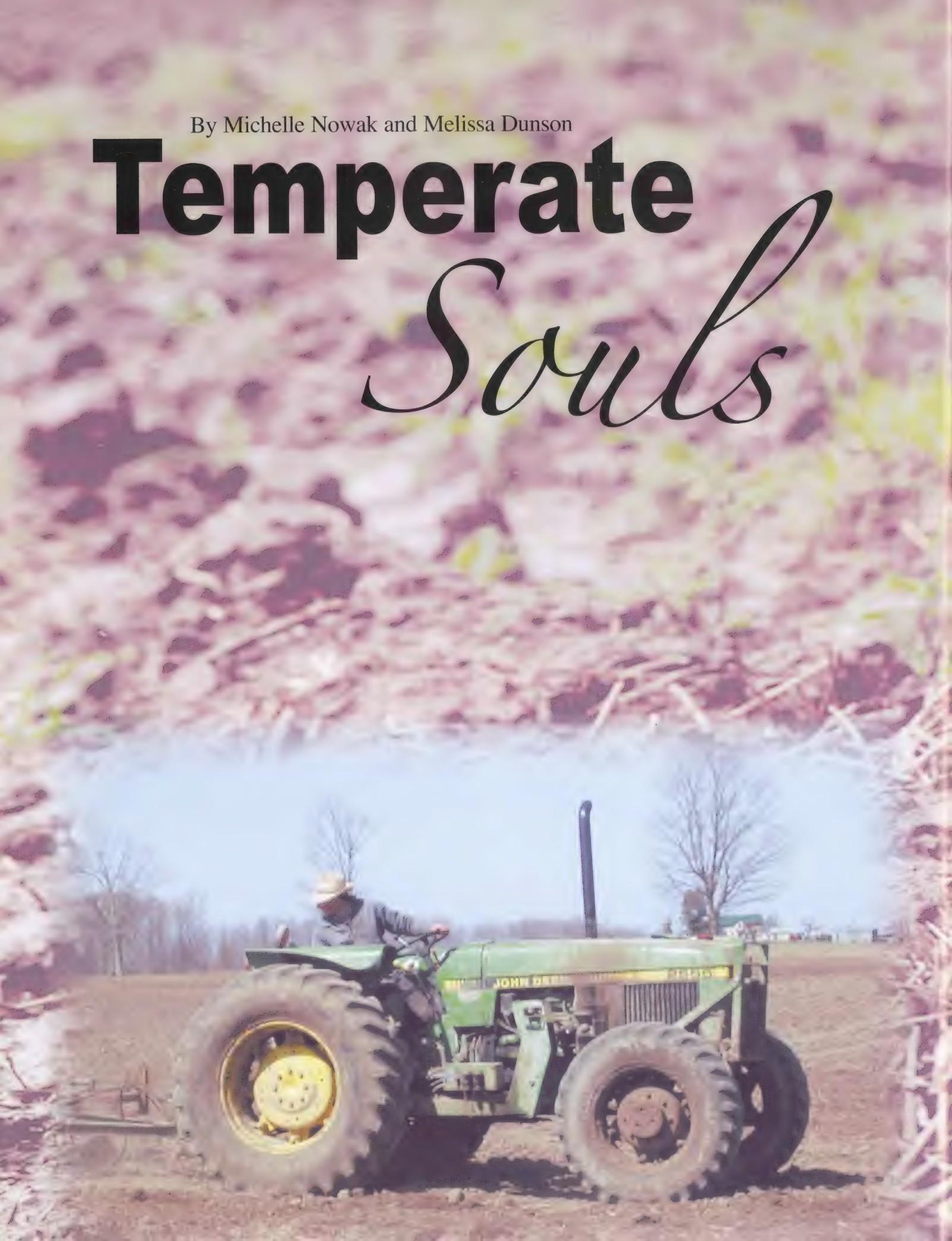


**"No, I'm from Iowa, I only work in outer space."**

**Kirk, "Star Trek IV"**

By Michelle Nowak and Melissa Dunson

# Temperate *Souls*



# Student sees smiles under stern visages

"Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery." Luke 16:18

The scripture on the billboard did not excite Crystal Harrell, senior elementary education major from Lebanon. It conjured up images of tight head scarves, long church services and strict rules.

But Harrell had made up her mind and embarked on her week long live-in study of the Spring River Mennonite Community in LaRussell, Mo. as part of the cultural studies requirement of her honor's degree.

Harrell became interested in the community when she read a series of their billboards along the highway, quoting Old Testament scriptures. She wanted to know what kind of people put themselves and their beliefs so unapologetically before the whole world. The free spirited Harrell had reservations about staying within the community and had certain preconceptions about the Mennonite community common to many.

"I didn't know how they would treat me," Harrell said. "I had an idea of them as very stern and almost puritanical."

When she arrived at the church for the first time in her red car, she noticed right away that she was different than these people. Even though this group of Mennonites was more modern than many (the group drives cars instead of horse buggies), they still require the vehicles to be very plain and the only colors allowed are black, white, gray or tan. Car stereos are frowned on in the community, so the Mennonites fill the empty places in their dashboards with silk flowers or pieces of decorative cloth.

"They only sing hymns so they don't really see the use of the radio," Harrell said.

The Mennonites consider themselves a people set apart and find a variety of ways to exhibit that. The most easily noted difference is their clothing. The men wear suspenders and the women wear dresses or skirts ending at the mid-calf length, black stockings and black flats. The emphasis is on modesty and simplicity.

Mennonite women wear their hair long and wear head coverings made of scarves. The practice is founded in a scripture found in I Corinthians that says women should have their heads covered while praying to prevent any dishonor. At first Harrell felt bashful wearing her hair down because the rest of the congregation's women wore head coverings, but then realized that although the Mennonites held a high standard for themselves and other members of their community, they were also very open and accepting of other people's convictions and did not expect other people to live by their moral code.

"Most people explain the scripture as a cultural thing, but they don't see it as that," Harrell said. "They see it as a command."

Harrell signed up to work with different families on different days and discovered the hard working attitude of the



Submitted Photos

**Above left,** a young Mennonite boy is helping with his family's daily chores. Mennonite children are expected to around the house at a very young age. **Above right,** Mennonite women's traditional outfit consists of a dress ending at the mid calf, a head covering or bonnet, black stalkings and black flat dress shoes. Mennonite men wear slacks, a button down shirt and suspenders.

Mennonites. She also discovered that when working, their dress changes slightly to allow wearing tennis shoes or flip flop sandals.

Because of her assumption about Mennonite culture, all she had brought was a pair of dress shoes and a bunch of black stalkings. Fortunately, the preachers wife had just bought a pair of sandals and was generous enough to give lend them to Harrell. She worked in the kitchen doing dishes and cooking and on the farm gathering crops and caring for the animals and said she learned to sew while staying with the group.

She knew that some Mennonite groups didn't allow electricity, but was surprised to find out this group had dishwashers, fax machines and word processors.

Crystal stayed with the Graber family the first two weeks of her study and then, due to a family reunion, she was moved to a cabin on another family's property with all of the amenities she would need with the exception of a stereo, television or computer.

Crystal attended the Mennonite church everyday and found that although she had originally thought her hosts would be strict and serious people, she found them to be fun loving people with a passion for life.

"I hadn't expected to laugh," Harrell said.

Also much to her surprise, Harrell got a glimpse into the arena of mutual respect evident in the parent/child relationship.

"I expected them to be spare not the rod kind of people with their kids," Harrell said. "But they were so kind to their kids."

Harrell said the parents' focus when a child misbehaved was to encourage discussion and come up with a fair and compromised solution.

Mennonites don't believe it's right for a person of faith to have any type of insurance because it isn't relying fully on God. The government allows them this idiosyncrasy because if anyone in the church is involved in an accident, the members pool their resources to pay the bills.

The same goes for hospital bills and during Harrell's three week trip people had to go to the hospital for hip replacement surgery, blunt trauma and to have fluid drained off of the brain.

"It angers me how they get treated sometimes and taken advantage of," Harrell said. "A man was involved in an accident and the other person involved wouldn't pay because they knew Mennonites don't believe in suing, so there's nothing he could do about it."

Her biggest surprise was her own personal agreement with 14 of the 17 articles in the church's constitution. The Mennonites no longer seemed strange and stern, but peaceful and kind.

"They're really such kind and sweet people with really good hearts," Harrell said.

Instead of elitist spiritual recluses, Harrell found the Mennonites were involved in a multitude of community projects including helping with a blood drive, sending cut fabrics to South America to make rugs, selling Tupperware and sending missionaries to Nicaragua and Honduras.



Submitted Photos

**Above,** Mennonites only sing hymns, so they have no use for car stereos. Instead they fill the holes in their dashboards with silk flowers or scraps of decorative cloth. **Left,** while not all Mennonites are farmers, many do make their living from the land. During Harrell's stay she stayed with a pig farmer and saw metalworkers and carpenters.



# MIRACLE ANGEL

**By Jessica Bogle  
Photos provided by Becky Bingham**



Seven nurses and 25 doctors worked with Becky Bingham, junior biology major, during her intensive hospital stay in December and January 2004.



Bingham was diagnosed with herpes of the lungs, a very rare disease with only four documented cases worldwide, all fatal, until now. Doctors are still not sure how Bingham contracted the disease because all of the other documented cases involved an individual who had received a lung transplant and Bingham had not.

# Student is only known survivor of rare illness

"What happened?" Becky Bingham wrote on a piece of paper to her father, Dale. She had just awakened from a drug-induced coma. Her friends, family, doctors, nurses, and hundreds of people throughout the world had been hoping for her full recovery from a rare lung virus, and continued to do so, even as she woke up after almost two weeks.

Becky, a junior biology major at Missouri Southern, fell ill suddenly during the last week of December 2004. On December 30th, she went to receive medical help. The nurses thought she had the flu, but after putting her on saline drip, they sent her home. However, they told her, if she did not feel better later, she was to go to the emergency room.

On New Year's Day, she was admitted into St. John's Medical Center in Joplin, Missouri. At this point, Becky had low blood pressure, a high fever, and felt very weak. Two-and-a-half hours after arriving, Becky was moved to the Intensive Care Unit, with reports from doctors that her pancreas and liver were failing. Then the doctor's questions began - hundreds of them - about Becky's lifestyle and health, in order to see if they could narrow down what the cause of the symptoms was. At 1:00 AM on January 2, mentions of "exploratory surgery" came from the doctor.

"That's when it really hit home," said Becky's father, Dale Bingham.

A couple hours later, the doctors changed their minds about the surgery. By 11:30 AM on January 2, they were now saying that Becky could have a rare liver disorder or leukemia. Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, they said, could handle it better. A helicopter was arranged to fly Becky to St. Louis. However, Becky's mother, Ginger, knew that if a helicopter arrived, she would not be able to ride with Becky, and would have to frantically drive to St. Louis. She began to pray desperately that a different way of transportation would be available - specifically, an airplane. Shortly after this prayer for help, it was reported that there were thunderstorms between Joplin and St. Louis, and therefore a helicopter would not be the best way to travel. In a short time, an

airplane was available to fly Becky and her mother to St. Louis. However, they discovered as they flew that there were no thunderstorms, and they experienced no turbulence. This was just one of many answered prayers to come.

Before an ambulance took Becky from St. John's, she had a seizure.

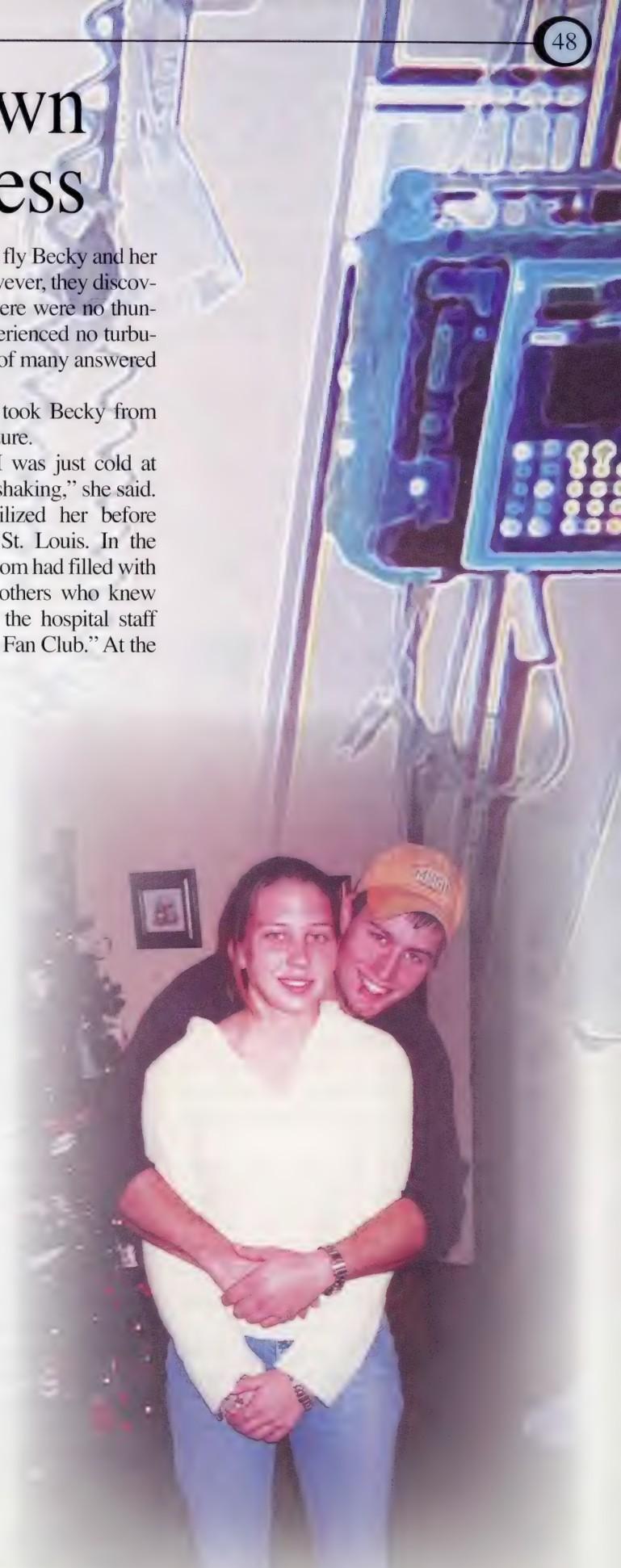
"The nurses thought I was just cold at first, but I couldn't stop shaking," she said.

Doctors quickly stabilized her before allowing her to fly to St. Louis. In the meantime, the waiting room had filled with so friends, family, and others who knew about the situation that the hospital staff began to call it "Becky's Fan Club." At the airport, Becky spoke only a few sentences.

This was the last thing she remembered before waking up in the hospital in St. Louis over two weeks later. Much had happened in that time; yet Becky woke up believing she had fallen asleep one night and had awoken the next morning. Little did she know at the time that almost three weeks had passed, or that she had been so close to death, puzzled the doctors, and become the center of the prayers of hundreds of people.

Becky was put into the drug-induced coma so the doctors could observe her, still not knowing the cause of the many life-threatening symptoms. Twenty-five doctors and several nurses watched Becky and searched for an answer.

Back home in Joplin, friends of the



Becky with boyfriend Jeremy Booth just after Christmas, only days before she was rushed to the hospital.

Bingham family and the members of the family's church, Wildwood Baptist Church in Joplin, were told of the situation. One such family is the family of Gene and Rita Glenn, whose daughter, Kari, is engaged to Becky's brother, Danny. Kari and Danny are both freshmen at Missouri Southern.

Kari told her mother that doctors were flying Becky to St. Louis. She ended up riding with Danny and Dale Bingham, Becky's father, and Jeremy, Becky's boyfriend, to St. Louis.

During the first week, Kari kept her family updated by phone. Rita Glenn, a Psychiatric Technical Advisor at the Ozark Center, is also a Certified Nurses Assistant and Certified Medical Assistant.

"My first thought was that this was really, really bad," Rita said. "There was nothing to indicate she would get better."

One night, as Becky's symptoms continued to worsen, Kari called her mother. During the conversation, Kari asked her the question burning on her heart and mind.

"Mom, I need to know if she is going to die," Kari said.

"Outside of a miracle of God, she is going to die," Rita said.

Rita said that at this point, she and Kari cried together over the phone for the first time since Becky arrived at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. Rita tried to console her daughter with words of faith.

"Don't give up hope, though, because with Christ, there is always hope," Rita said.

#### **Timeline of the first week:**

Monday, January 3 - Doctors told the Bingham family that Becky's lungs were filling up with fluid and her bone marrow quit functioning.

Tuesday, January 4 - Becky's father refers to it as "Black Tuesday." Pastor Joe Morris came from Wildwood Baptist Church. He arrived with a family friend from the church, Tim Wofford. The men were allowed to pray over Becky and anoint her with oil.

They did not plan to stay long; however, as they visited, Becky's condition worsened, so they decided to stay with the family overnight. At this point, Becky's temperature had been 105° for four days and all of her organs were failing.

The doctors were unable to give her any fever reducer, however, due to problems with her liver and pancreas. As a result, Becky's body began to swell.

When speaking to Becky's parents, the

doctor said, "Just pray."

Wednesday, January 5 - This was a pivotal day for Becky and the doctors, along with her family and

friends. During the day and the night before, many people at home in Joplin felt a burden to pray specifically that the doctors would have wisdom to discover the source of Becky's illness.

"I had such a burden to pray for the doctors to have wisdom that night," Rita said. "And it turned out that about five other people had felt burdened to pray at the same time that night."

Dale and Ginger Bingham also lifted Becky up to God together, surrendering the situation into God's hands while praying in the hospital's chapel. Mr. Bingham knew that God had taken over at that moment. Now all they could do was wait to see the results of their prayers.



**Becky posing with brother Danny. She loves to be outdoors, but her illness kept her inside for months.**

Up to this day, the doctors had given Becky three of the most powerful antibiotics in the world. However, after many hours of research and tests, the doctors finally found the answer they had been searching for. Becky's symptoms were a result of a rare form of Herpes simplex virus 1 that appears in the lung. It is still a mystery as to how Becky contracted it. Research had only found four other cases in the world. These four other cases involved a lung transplant resulting in the contraction of the virus, which Becky had never had.

In addition, the four cases had previous struggles with immune deficiency, which Becky did not show signs of. The doctors had found the answer, but still a mystery

was on their hands that they would never discover the answer to. The most frightening discovery, however, was that all four cases had ended in death. Despite this grim news, the Bingham family trusted God to do what was best for Becky. In addition, the members of Wildwood Baptist Church along with family and friends lifted her up in prayer. The story of Becky spread quickly, and soon, the family was receiving emails from not only the Joplin area, but throughout the world. Even missionaries from around the world sent letters to the family.

"She got so many emails that the guy who was in charge of [delivering the emails to the patients] read the emails and eventually came and told us that he was praying for Becky, too," said Becky's mother. "Most people didn't necessarily know her last name, but if you mentioned Becky, they knew who you were talking about - everywhere!"

The entire school district of Galena, Kansas, where Ginger's sister is a teacher, sent emails and gifts to the family. In addition, the Biology club at Missouri Southern sent cards. Ken Kennedy, who works for Missouri Southern's security department, even made a special trip to visit Becky in the hospital because she had worked for him previously.

After doctors discovered that Becky had a virus, and not, in fact, an infection, they changed her treatments. Antibiotics are used for infections, and would not cure the effects of a virus. Therefore, on Wednesday afternoon, the doctors immediately started Becky on a 21-day virus medicine. From that point on, Becky started to heal and recover.

When Becky was in recovery, she wrote the note to her father, asking him "What happened to me?" her father then explained to his daughter about her illness.

"It was hard for me to believe at first," Becky said, "It didn't really kick in that I had almost died."

Finally, on January 12th, Becky's doctor reported to her family for the first time that he thought Becky would live.

#### **Becky's Angel**

During those critical days in the hospital, Becky's mother, Ginger, was distraught and in shock. One day, a man spoke to her from behind and said, "Can I help you? What's wrong?"

After telling this stranger about Becky, he replied, "She's going to be OK." Ginger heard the hospital chaplain say something

to her, and when she turned around to speak to this stranger again, he was gone. She quickly went to her husband, Dale, and told him, "I think I just saw an angel." Ginger saw him another time later. This time, she asked him, "Excuse me, sir, but are you an angel?" The man laughed and said, "No, I'm not an angel, just a sinner saved by grace."

However, Ginger believed he was more than just a stranger.

"He would just appear out of nowhere. And every time we saw him, we would get another good report about Becky from the doctors," she said.

Later, the man brought his wife to meet the Bingham family. They stayed updated with them, and when Becky was brought out of the most serious area of ICU into the next level, the man and his wife were allowed to come in and pray over Becky.

#### A Connection of Love

Jeff Hadley, a member of Wildwood Baptist Church, gave a precious gift to the Binghams one Sunday morning. Hadley, a technician at KSNF-TV in Joplin, decided to try to wire the sound system at Wildwood Baptist Church so that the Bingham family could communicate with their church family during the service. Towards the end of the service, Pastor Joe Morris stood in front of the congregation, becoming

choked up as he asked Jeff if things were ready to go. Soon, the church was able to hear Dale and Ginger through the speaker system and yell out words of encouragement, along with cheers and applause to let them know they cared. Many people in the church that morning broke into tears as they heard the Bingham's speak tiredly through the phone. But they hung up the phone knowing that their church family loved them and were praying for Becky day and night.

#### The Dance of Hope

When Becky was brought out of the drug-induced coma, she remembers hearing a song playing in the ICU. The nurses were amazed to see her dance to the beat of the song as she woke up.

They knew then that Becky would be all right because she was a fighter. Even when they tried to help her walk later, Becky refused to stop walking in order to rest.

"I wanted to get up and go. I was ready for that physical therapist every day," Becky said.

To the nurses and doctors amazement, Becky did not use a wheelchair as she left the hospital in late January.

"That was my best day - not that I was better, but that I knew God healed me and that He gave me the strength to walk out of the hospital without a wheelchair," Becky said.

Applause and tears burst in the lobby as Becky walked out of the hospital – alive, making her the only survivor in the world of an extremely rare virus.

Wofford, a friend of the Bingham's who visited them in the hospital, wrote a poem in honor of Becky's survival entitled "Becky: Miracle Angel."

On March 9, Dale and Ginger posted a letter to their church family in the bulletin of the church: Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, In January of this year, our family experienced one of the darkest times in our lives when our daughter, Becky, was hospitalized with a very rare and dangerous infection. God blessed our family through all of the support, prayers, and encouragement we received from our church family. We cannot find the right words to accurately express just how thankful we are for everything each of you has done to

help us through this very difficult time. Thank you so much for all of the cards, letters, emails, phone calls, personal visits, and financial assistance we were so blessed with during our time of great need. Becky is home now, and we are so grateful for God's healing grace. She truly is a "miracle angel." During her recovery, please continue to keep her in your prayers. Once again, thank you all so much for being there for our family. Sincerely, Dale and Ginger Bingham.

In response to the overwhelming amount of people who sent cards, emails, letters, or simply prayed for her from all over the world, Becky is eternally grateful.

"There's so many people I want to thank for praying for me, but I don't even know who they are," Becky said.

Since Becky has come home, she has been ill due to her weakened immune system. She has even started to lose some of her hair. However, she keeps a positive outlook on life. Very rarely, if ever, will she complain about her situation.

When a Bible study group asked for prayer requests one Sunday night, Becky simply asked for the group to pray for her friends who were going through hard times, and made no mention of her own needs.

Becky is more willing to try new things these days - she even tried lobster for the first time recently, just for the sake of trying it. She is still the outgoing person she was before, and has a passion for hunting.

She desires to finish school as a Pre-Med major and go to medical school later in life. Her doctor in St. Louis even said that after all of these experiences, Becky would make a wonderful doctor some day because she would be able to empathize greatly with her patients. In the more recent future, she will be a bridesmaid in her brother Danny's wedding in July 2005.

Becky's struggle for life this year affected not only her family, but people around the world. One such person was her high school biology teacher.

"My high school biology teacher came over two days after I was released from the hospital. He had lost his faith, and he said, 'Becky, I haven't prayed in years, but you deserve prayer right now,'" Becky said.

Becky has not only a healed body, but also a renewed spirit since her time in the hospital.

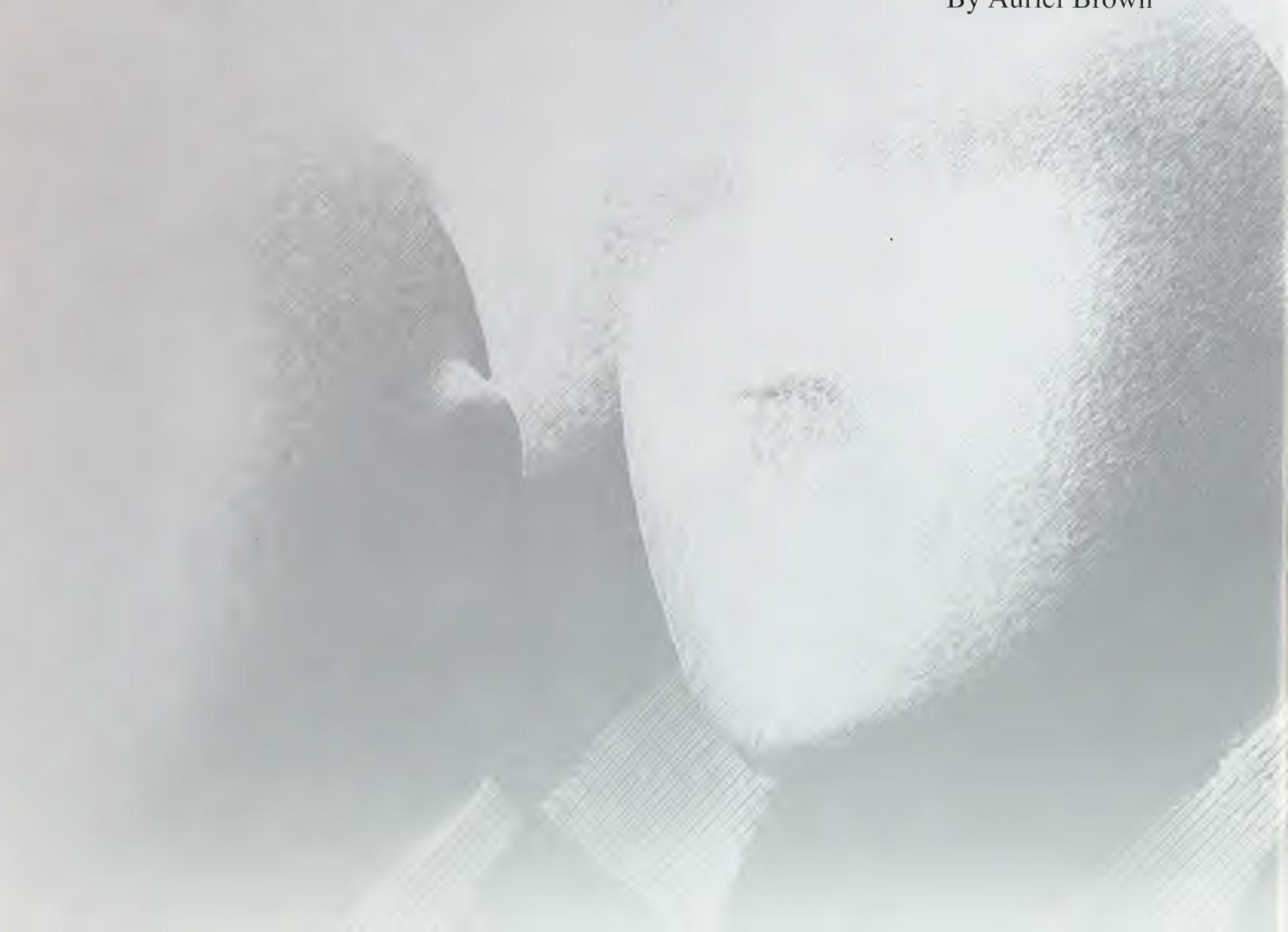
"I used to take my faith in God for granted," she said, "I will never do that again. I give all the glory to God."



Ginger and Dale Bingham the proud parents of the "Miracle Angel".

...not just  
another face  
in the crowd...

By Auriel Brown





fashion



# Fashion: conformity or faux pas?

**E**veryone in the room whistled and cheered as each man and woman took their turn down the runway. Short miniskirts, Capri pants, stiletto heels, low cut shirts, and cleavage baring bikinis were among the items showcased for the evening.

This was the scene at Jukebox Saturday Night Club at a recent fashion show, introducing the new styles for the season.

Anytime a group of people tries to establish what is fashionable for the whole certain questions are raised. What is it about popular clothing that draws so much attention? When we prep ourselves to face the world are we dressing according to what we like and what makes us feel comfortable or do we simply fall victim to fashion conformity?

The fashion industry, one of the most profitable to date, is constantly changing the standards for what is acceptable and stylish.

With fads such as low rise and ripped jeans to ponchos, from the "hip-hop" to the "preppy look" young adults keep department stores busy.

Aaron Garcia, one of the fashion show's models said he is into the more clean cut look, but is often mistaken for high maintenance.

"I'm a little bit of a prep," Garcia said.

"I like polos and khakis."

Garcia said dressing up and keeping up with the current styles can make the difference in catching a woman's attention.

"Some girls may see a guy who is dressed nice and may think he's clean and really takes care of himself," he said.

Garcia thinks his paying attention to style has paid off for him and said he notices that sometimes women even approach him first.

While he does not claim to be picky about his choice of dress, Garcia said what he wears can affect his evening.

"If I don't feel comfortable, I don't feel sociable," he said.

Krista Guilford, coordinator of the fashion show, said fashion shows are the perfect event to see what's new in fashion and what to look out for. She said she feels that people are caught up in the phenomenon of having "the look" because it appears to be a priority in society.

"It's all about what's in and what's not," Guilford said. "You have to have the right hair, the right makeup, the right style."

Guilford fully admits to being a style diva thinks it is important for her to keep up with the ever changing fashions.

"I feel the need to shop every other week just to update my wardrobe," she said.

Guilford also credits the media for its

influence on fashion, personally and globally.

"I think when you see people dressed up on television and in magazines others feel like they have to go get it," Guilford said.

While many people fight to stay fashion champions, striving to resemble what is sported in the latest music videos or featured on magazine covers, there are society's fashion underdogs who make an even bigger statement with their dress attire. That statement is individuality.

For some, the constant change in fashion along with increasingly high prices and the pressure to keep up with what's "in," is not worth the hassle or lack of expression cookie cutter fashion brings.

Jake Williams, senior political science major, describes his look as "totally eighties anarchist punk."

Claiming to be accustomed to awkward stares from others, Williams said his look is definitely a break from the norm and thinks with his look he sometimes sets himself up for trouble.

While Williams said he dresses in what he feels most comfortable in, he thinks others like to follow trends because they see no other options.

"What is there in life if you don't fit in," Williams said.

David Carnine, freshman vocal music

major, said he goes for the more long, baggy, skate boarder style of punk clothing.

"My style says I'm unique and I don't try to be like everyone else," Carnine said. "I wear what's not considered socially acceptable."

Popular alternative clothing stores like Hot Topic tend to the tastes of those like Carnine and Williams who go for the more eccentric look. Lindsay Hawkins, a two year sales associate at Joplin's Hot Topic, located in Northpark Mall, said she also gets strange looks and is often followed because of her numerous piercings and unusual style of dress when she is shopping in other stores.

"People constantly ask me am I gothic", Hawkins said.

Hawkins said one of the good things about Hot Topic is that it offers a wide variety of items that can't be found in other stores, especially for those seeking a wardrobe change.

"It's for people that want to be different," Hawkins said. "When they step in here they don't feel like they're being judged," Hawkins said.

While those who dress differently defend their choice as pure individuality, others see ulterior motives.

"They don't know fashion," said Sabrina Carr, another fashion show participant and fashion fanatic. "They want to be fashion rebels and their attitudes match their clothing."

Guilford also said she feels it is for attention. She said if someone is walking through the mall and is wearing dark gothic clothing people are going to notice.

"If you don't get any attention at all," Guilford said. "Negative attention is better than none at all."

So with fashion debate continues. Is it all about social acceptability or is it about making a statement?

Will society as a whole ever come to an agreement on what looks good and what should simply be left in the closet? Maybe not but one thing is certain, clothing stores eccentric and popular will continue to reap the benefits.

